Locating mobilities and possibilities: Art spaces in Beijing and Berlin

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Abstract

How do artists' place-making practices shape urban space? How is it possible that art spaces with no commercial gallery structure survive in the competitive urban arena? What concepts, strategies and forms do they take? How are these urban contestations situated with regards to the ubiquitous creativity imperative or the new mobilities paradigm? And what do the spatial consequences of these place-making processes reveal about the urban spaces of possibility?

To address these questions, I develop an attempt to operationalize the comparative urbanism critiques through an experimental approach towards comparison. Rather than categorically dividing Beijing from Berlin as comparative sites, a broad ontology of the urban as a relational space is established to think about the art spaces in connection to one another. This approach makes a distinction between the theoretical case being investigated and the sites where the investigation takes place. Employing a narrow definition of art spaces, the qualitative fieldwork is comprised of interviews, on-site observation and interpretive clustering around themes. The empirical results are organized around conceptual motivations, place-making strategies and spatio-temporal consequences. Art concepts behind the making of these art spaces highlight the shared reference points from Beuys to the Situationists, while also establishing some of the groundwork for understanding the truncated role of material space and distinguishing between engagements with the art space and their location. The place-making strategies focus on the resourceful modes of dealing with the threatening banalities of rent and intra-urban competition. Developing the concept of creative capital in these place-making activities reveals the fluctuating exchange rates of creativity in the city. Despite structural differences regarding land-use governance in Beijing or contract terms in Berlin, the strategies of staying reveal shared processes of leveraging creativity. Creative capital can be effectively exchanged across economic and political differences, and transnational resource transfers seemingly supersede many barriers, but there are limits. These limits are scrutinized by considering the temporal dimension of the art space and different aspects of precariousness. The temporary and nomadic characteristics present a stretched idea of space, extending across urban boundaries and favoring an interpretation of endurance over accelerated ephemerality. Theorizing back based on the empirical material, several concepts are reconsidered and advanced. The myth of the urban frontier as a legitimation of conquest through the figure of the pioneer is reconsidered through narratives of exploration and circulation. The urban frontier as a progressive possibility is displaced with empirically-sourced ideas of nomadic cruise ship space and phoretic relationships. These concepts offer an alternative to understanding mobility between places, through its illustration of mobility as constituted by a particular kind of place. Considering art spaces as spaces of possibility challenge perceptions of inevitability, but also evoke risks, such as the isolationist gesture. Finally, a reflection on the heuristic presentism of studying mobility is coupled with a call for more longitudinal methodologies in order to achieve a better balance for a comparative approach that overcomes presumed categories of difference without ignoring historically constituted structures of power.

Contents

Chapter 1

Catalyst

At the beginning, I played with the SoHo words. . . maybe it sounds very cynical, but at the time we were desperate, because everything was being torn down and we had to attract people. . . they recognized it.
— Berenice Angremy[1]

Place-making in today's China is a contested process.
— John Friedmann[2]

There is a triumphalism to telling the story of how 798 was saved from demolition that has been coupled with cynicism from the outset. It was a victory haunted by the belief of the key actors involved in its preservation that though the area had been saved from demolition, it was also set on an irrevocable course towards commercialization and regulation. What was once a settlement of subversive artists would inevitably make way for touristic consumption. It serves as an inspiration and catalyst for the following work.

The story of 798 is set in Beijing, and provides the original inspiration for exploring the role of creativity for urban space. 798 refers to the address of a former manufacturing compound outside of the Fourth Ring Road in the Chaoyang District. Constructed by the Chinese and Soviets in the 1950s with the help of East German engineers in the Bauhaus style, the compound covers sixty four hectares. It is comprised of multiple factory and office structures that formerly accommodated Asia's largest military electronics plant, which was run as a state-owned enterprise. The area was largely de-industrialized in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Seven Stars Group, a municipality-based management group, administers the compound. As manufacturing shut down and factory workers were laid off, the

[1] Currier (2008) p. 260.
[2] Friedmann (2007) p. 277.

Figure 1.1: Walking through 798 in 2012, I encountered smooth roads and new street lights that were installed after 2006. Photo source: Lifen Ren-Heidenreich.

Seven Stars Group began leasing spaces in the 1990s to generate rents to help pay for the pensions owed to former workers. The large spaces and low rents attracted artists, and the timing in conjunction with other changes in Beijing's artistic scene was serendipitous. Many artists had been displaced by the recent dismantling of another artists' enclave in Beijing (Yuanmingyuan Artist Village), the prestigious Chinese Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) had just relocated the campus in proximity to 798, and the 1990s was also a period in which many artists moved or came back to Beijing from elsewhere.

The story of artistic repurposing in 798 often extols its physical and community-oriented characteristics. It was a "perfect venue for art studios and exhibition halls," which served in the early years as an underground village.[3] Currier describes this early period in utopian terms:

> In the beginning, as with other artists' villages, the artists lived together as a community. Many recall those early years as a sort of utopia; they lived in cheap, amazing architectural spaces, where they were able to work away from the rest of the city, yet also had the space to arrange exhibitions and enjoy each other's works.[4]

So, when the Seven Stars Group and the municipality planned to demolish the area

[3] Zhang (2014) p. 832.
[4] Currier (2008) p. 245.

to construct a high-tech park, the new users of the space knew their time was limited and they launched a campaign to challenge these plans. One key figure in this campaign was Thinking Hands, a cultural organization founded in 2003 and led by Huang Rui and Berenice Angremy to respond to the threat of demolition. Thinking Hands engaged primarily in advocacy through international publicity for their Dashanzi International Art Festival, the book *Beijing 798*, and place marketing. As Angremy described in the quote above, they were prepared to speak to familiar tropes like "SoHo" in order to get attention (a discussion of this trope follows in Section 1.1). Foreign officials like Viviane Reding (European Union Commissioner for Education and Cultural Affairs) saw 798 as "proof that China was opening up" when she visited in 2003.[5]

Political representation and timing also worked in their favor. Li Xiangqun, a CAFA professor based in 798 and a representative in the People's Congress of Beijing tabled a motion with the municipal government to protect the area as an art district that was ultimately passed.[6] With the 2008 Beijing Olympics looming, and the international perception of 798 as a symbol of tolerance, the infrastructure investments began in 2006. Seemingly, this marked the end of a period of contestation and the beginning of commercialization and regulation. The Seven Stars Group engaged in a strategy of aggressively maximizing rents; festivals were now officially under the purview of their management and contacts to important foreign political figures under strict control.[7]

Still, though 798 may now follow in a typical commercial real estate development path, the period of contestation between 2002 and 2006, and the outcome of preservation marks a significant departure from the normalized experience of demolition in Beijing. The story of 798, by overturning centralized planning policies in a context of rare political reversals, stands alone. Especially in the decade before the 798 story begins, the experience of demolition was widespread in Beijing; entire low rise residential neighborhoods gave way to high-rise housing complexes, business districts were built from freshly razed expanses, and new infrastructure paved over cobbled alleyways on a massive scale throughout the 1990s.[8] Demolition was also endemic to the experience on the outskirts of Beijing, in the peripheral areas where art villages were regularly torn down to make way for new housing developments.[9]

On multiple fronts, the experience of 798 around 2004 suggested that these newcomers were not plugging into a pre-existing urban structure or serving as component parts of a pre-determined path of urban development. However cynical they

[5] Currier (2008) p. 246.

[6] Zhang (2014) p. 834.

[7] Currier already alludes to the possibility of this in 2008, which is confirmed by Zhang in 2014. Zhang also offers an account of how seemingly subversive artists serve to validate the political regime (2014).

[8] The 1990s was a period of mass demolition, commodification and construction in Beijing, led by the Old and Dilapidated Housing Redevelopment Program. It is credited with replacing most of Beijing's low-rise *hutong* neighborhoods with higher-density, high-rise residential buildings. See e.g. Zhang (2008); Stone (2008); Shin (2009); Shin (2010).

[9] Jiang prefaces his study of Caochangdi with a thorough overview of art villages in Beijing (2010). See also Ren/Sun (2012).

Figure 1.2: A repurposed industrial chimney being used as a signpost for galleries reflects many material remnants like rusty fixed hammerhead cranes and unused railway tracks in various stages of dismemberment.

Figure 1.3: Outside of Pace Gallery, a contemporary art dealer with galleries in New York and London. Their Beijing branch is located in 798. Opening in 2008, they were one of the first major New York galleries to open a branch in Beijing.

themselves may have been about this, they were shaping the city and its course.

1.1 Art in the city and the creativity imperative

The 798 story is inspirational for generating a rich variety of investigations into the role of art in the city,[10] and resonates with a range of studies in this field. Indeed, the study of the role of art and artists in the city has been a popular area of research and theorization, resulting in decrees that "art is now ubiquitous in urban development."[11] Within urban studies, there are a number of established approaches towards addressing the role of art and artists specifically as instruments and agents of redevelopment, regeneration or renaissance through modes of economic development, gentrification and "cosmopolitanizing."[12] As Pinder describes, "When art is considered in relation to the urban it is often in terms of works designed to enhance public spaces aesthetically, and more generally of products and practices that are part of

[10] Leanza (2007); Currier (2008); Gescher (2008); Rui (2008); Zhuang (2009); Ren/Sun (2012); Zhang (2014); Yin et al. (2015).

[11] Miles (2007) p. 13.

[12] Zukin (1982); Cole (1987); Miles (1997); Lloyd (2002); Ley (2003); Chang/Lee (2003); Cameron/Coaffee (2005); Lloyd (2006); Markusen (2006); Wojan/Dayton/McGranahan (2007); Markusen et al. (2008).

cultural strategies of urban redevelopment and 'regeneration'."[13] These studies focus on broader processes of urban change, subsuming art and artists as facilitators of certain trajectories of change with cosmopolitan aspirations.

Cosmopolitan ascriptions or assumptions about art coincide with tendencies to characterize the relationship between art and the city as symbiotic. For example, when considering studies about the city as a location for the art world,[14] and the way in which related "Bilbao effects" reveal the symbolic value of star architects or artists in the city.[15] Modes of aestheticizing the city through art[16] are thus connected to status symbols of the "global city."[17] These works positioning art and artists in the scheme of "becoming global" or more cosmopolitan assume a utilitarian function of art in terms of its significance for the scheme of greater urban development goals. The focus of these works is ultimately on the broader processes of urban change (usually economic development) in which art and artists play a role. A notable counterexample of the symbiotic relationship is Novy and Colomb's study of the modes of resistance by artists to neoliberal development.[18]

Art within the neighborhood or community has also enjoyed some attention. These studies are more focused on aspects like community-building and political contestation. For instance, in exploring the role of art in giving business districts "a personality,"[19] as a mode of differentiating identities of neighborhoods and districts,[20] as a feature attraction for other professionals and a key signifier for place marketing.[21] Art in community-building[22] or community-based arts[23] have also looked more closely at the practices of art within a more specific social context. The body of work on public art similarly considers the relationship between public space and the politics of selecting, financing and installing art.[24]

Underlying these considerations about the role of art in the city are assumptions about the figure of the artist. In Ley's discussion of aestheticization, he argues that artists are conceptualized as the outcome of a middle or dominant class. Building on Bourdieu (1984), he contends there is a precondition for particular aesthetic appreciation based on a distance from need.[25] The Bourdieusian approach to artists in the city would be to develop an analysis about the background of the artist herself –what created the creator? A contrasting view conceives of artists as part of a creative underclass whose productivity is measured in symbolic rather than economic values,

[13] Pinder (2008) p. 731.
[14] While (2003).
[15] Rybczynski (2002); Haas/Pegels (2006); McNeill (2009).
[16] Ley (2003); Harris (2012).
[17] Chang (2002); Kong (2012).
[18] Novy/Colomb (2013). See also Rose (1997).
[19] Ward (2007).
[20] Lazzeretti (2003); Bain (2003).
[21] Kearns/Philo (1993); Zukin (1995); Lloyd (2002); Ley (2003); Pratt (2011); Colomb (2012a).
[22] Sousa (2004); Barnes et al. (2006).
[23] Rose (1997).
[24] Miles (1997); Deutsche (1998); Hall/Robertson (2001); Sharp/Pollock/Paddison (2005).
[25] Ley (2003).

but is equally concerned with the class background.[26] Indeed, the sociology of art is an established field, dealing almost exclusively with the background of the artist, but not the creative processes or art works.[27]

Rather than focusing on art or artists in the city as a static category to be instrumentalized in urban planning, or whose backgrounds should be interrogated in the scheme of social relations, I wanted to focus on the practice of initiating, claiming and sustaining art spaces. This is an important analytical shift from taking the artist as a starting point, towards focusing on their activity and their space. The period of contestation in 798 was about making art space. It was successful in part because of the strategies used by artists and advocates, but these strategies were also possible because of a context in which they had access to influential international actors and importantly because it was a context in which creativity had a value.

The role of international influence and the ubiquity of creativity indicates the importance of mobility, and that the relevant forms of mobility extends beyond issues of place preference. Studies about art and the city that include a consideration of mobility focus mostly on the artist and their relative mobility in comparison to other professions. These studies focus on their location preferences and are concerned about the places they go.[28] The forms of mobility evidenced in the 798 story include the mobility of ideas, the ubiquity of the idea that creativity has value for the city. It also includes the mobility of resources like having access to important international political figures. Focusing on their place-making reveals how these multiple modes of mobility are at play. Indeed, this speaks to the "new mobilities paradigm," which considers the multiplicity of mobilities and re-territorializations.[29]

The new mobilities paradigm also stresses a shift about the object of study, to "open up all sites, places and materialities to the mobilities that are always already coursing through them."[30] Instead of focusing on a sedentarism as the default or "normal" state from which mobility deviates, the focus is on the dynamic processes of mobility. I connect this to place-making and a focus on the making of the art space rather than a static definition of art, artist or art space, though I discuss site selection in greater detail in the next chapter.

In prioritizing the process of claiming, initiating, preserving and otherwise making art spaces over the category of art or artist as the focus on investigation, the instrumental influence of creativity in the context of urban contestation becomes highly relevant. The elevation of creativity to an imperative has served to advance the influence of art in the city in tangible ways. The ubiquity, mobility and vast dissemination of variously named "creative class," "creative industry" and "creative city" policies often

[26] Morgan/Ren (2012); Gornostaeva/Campbell (2012).
[27] Hennion/Grenier (2000).
[28] Markusen (2006); Markusen/Schrock (2006); Wojan/Dayton/McGranahan (2007); Boren/Young (2013).
[29] Cresswell (2006); Hannam/Sheller/Urry (2006); Sheller/Urry (2006); Urry (2007); Cresswell (2010).
[30] Sheller/Urry (2006) p. 209.

reflect an inconsistent set of ideas, values, and even concrete tactics. Yet rather than receding into the policy wastelands, it continues to gain traction. Their widespread impact in the city helps to account for the intelligibility of the "SoHo" reference in Angremy's advocacy work, as a signifier for something attractive. The reference is less about the specific district of "SoHo" in New York, and more about what SoHo represents in the scheme of urban development. It refers directly to Zukin's work on the complicit role of artists in the real estate development of SoHo starting in the 1960s.[31] Presumably, "understanding SoHo" implied for Angremy that the decision makers could see the speculative value of creativity in the city.

The effectiveness of the "SoHo" reference is also a signifier for a larger body of urban policy based on assumptions about creativity in the city, often that have little to do with art or artists. Urban policies dealing with creativity, what Peck has called a "hackneyed cliché of contemporary policy-making," seek to promote economic development:

> Policies designed to stimulate the "creative growth" of city economies - usually by way of market-friendly interventions in the cultural sphere, to attract or retain elite workers - might be characterized as the most conspicuously successful innovation in the recent history of urban policy-making. They are "successful" in the sense that the reach of these policies seems to have become near ubiquitous.[32]

The ubiquity of these ideas is what makes the reference to "SoHo" intelligible as a growth-oriented signifier, not a specific neighborhood south of Houston Street.[33] "SoHo" served Angremy as a reference to creativity leading the way for urban economic growth via commercialization. The idea of artists in SoHo represents something in Beijing, because of the pervasive "creativity growth" policy agenda. Of course the historical experience of SoHo for artists also makes it clear to Angremy that it is cynical of her to evoke the trope of SoHo, because this path of urban preservation would pave the way for ultimately displacing the artists that were seeking to protect the area.[34] Creativity, associated with imagination and inspiration, is transformed into an urban imperative ascribed with driving inevitable commercialization and the resulting cost-driven displacement.[35] The relevance of the creativity imperative has little to do with creativity and much more with the fact that it has become an urban trope connected to economic development.

Regardless of the actual effectiveness of creativity in urban development,[36] this dissemination of policies and research (not to mention the media) has elevated cre-

[31] Zukin (1982).

[32] Peck (2011) p. 41.

[33] Wang (2004); Gibson (2012); Mellander et al. (2013).

[34] Again, echoing Zukin's (1982) work on how artists facilitated real estate development in SoHo, which eventually also served to displace them.

[35] Zukin/Braslow (2011).

[36] The breadth of this literature further speaks to the arrival of "creativity" in the city as enormously influential. Creative class critics have taken issue with the theory's causal argument, conceptual vagueness, categories and measurements. Peck and Pratt have criticized the causal links between growth, the actors

ativity in the city from policy cliché to urban imperative.[37] Lacking in conceptual coherency and rich in influence, the urban imperative to facilitate creative space, creative actors and creativity in general lends itself to being co-opted by a diversity of interests and actors. These newly empowered actors are able to appropriate the various creative class policies, norms, or ideas influential in the city for their own interests. These interests may have nothing to do with the economic development goals at the heart of the creativity imperative.

Rather than contribute to the extensive literature critiquing creativity-led urban development, it seems more fruitful to take as given the proliferation of certain ideas and policies, and to investigate their externalities. McCann and Ward's work on mobile urbanism is helpful here. They conceive of mobile urbanism in which actors "mobilize objects and ideas to serve particular interests and with particular material consequences."[38] Policy mobility research[39] is often focused on issues of directionality, like policy transfer or policy circulation and speed,[40] like the focus on "fast" policies that travel quickly.[41] Of course among these easy travelers are creativity-related urban policies. Moreover, they intersect with the mobility of actors. So the strategies in 798 employed during the period of contestation included references to urban tropes like "SoHo" from *elsewhere*, and contacting influential figures like Viviane Reding from *elsewhere*. These multiple forms of mobility, in terms of ideas, resources, and actors intersect at the point of claiming space.

Therefore, a focus on the making of art space would be a means to understand at a basic level how these intersecting forms of mobility are having an impact on the city. It explores how mobile actors reference ideas from another place and leverage influence from abroad to make a material, localized, territorialized, spatial impact. This project will assume that the creativity imperative has empowered new constellations of actors in the realm of interurban competition. Given this, how are these actors claiming and shaping urban space? A closer investigation of the practices of those newly empowered would be important to understand the full impact of this creativity imperative. This leads to two promising areas of investigation: First, the

and their incentives. Peck (2005); Pratt (2008). Critics also question its affirmation of a neoliberal approach to urban development, which does not address issues of equity. Peck (2005); McCann (2007); Lorenzen/Andersen (2009); Krätke (2010). Many have criticized Florida's lenient agglomeration of the creative professions into one category without a clear definition of "creative," rendering a statistical verification of his argument impossible, including Glaeser/Mare (2001); Peck (2005); Rausch/Negrey (2006); Storper/Manville (2006); Reese/Sands (2008); Markusen et al. (2008); Reese/Faist/Sands (2010). The central part of the argument linking urban economic growth with the creative class has further been challenged by researchers like Markusen whose empirical data reveal that once educational attainment is taken out of the equation, there is no relationship between growth and creativity (2006). The enormous body of literature often based on rigorous empirical investigations of the relationship between creativity and the city reflects a broad, growing academic skepticism, including a general review of the potential for urban growth. Sawicky (2003); Musterd/Ostendorf (2004); Hall (2004); Glaeser (2005); Montgomery (2005); Scott (2006); Shearmur (2007a); Shearmur (2007b).

[37] Peck (2005); Peck (2011).

[38] McCann/Ward (2011) p. xxiv.

[39] Cochrane/Ward (2012); Shore/Wright (2011).

[40] See e.g. Lowry/McCann (2011); Roy (2011).

[41] See e.g. Peck/Theodore (2001); Peck (2005).

multiple mobilities that give rise to this imperative and the "paradigm" of mobility as a frame for the conditions facilitating new claims to urban space.[42] Second, the spatial consequences of these contestations as representations of spaces of possibility within cities. This space of possibility is situated within the tension between contestation and inevitabilities. It will be further explored in the last chapter, but alludes to both Simone's discussion of Rancière on the city as a space of possibility, as well as Amoore's discussion of the simultaneity of uncertainty and opportunity that possibility represents.[43]

Furthermore, the role of mobility with regards to art in the city remains understudied. Notable exceptions include the aforementioned studies about location preference,[44] the historical case of emigration and exile where artists were forced to move for political reasons[45] and studies on immigrant artists' aesthetics.[46] Yet these again focus only on the mobility of the individual artist. In the 798 story there were multiple mobilities at play: the mobility of newcomers who had claimed and advocated preserving the space, the mobility connected to the international art festivals, bringing international attention and visitors that held political influence, and the mobility of signifying ideas about the urban. Urban space is contested space, and 798 provides a thought-provoking story about the powerful practices that were available and instrumental for making art spaces.

1.2 Research question

Inspired by the example of 798, it is tempting to focus on the ways that creativity can be leveraged to counter centralized urban planning. Yet spotlighting urban planning would elide the broad range of urban contestations that deal with the everyday context of a competitive urban arena. Indeed, the inspiration of 798 was also about place-making practices of claiming, re-purposing, and the activities of making an art space, which was meaningful for its users.[47] It was the reason artists came to 798, the reason they wanted to preserve the area, and the transformation of manufacturing space into art space served as the ultimate argument for thwarting the city's plans. It was not just any space they were making, it was an art space. Even before being faced with the demolition plans, there were everyday challenges of initiating, running, funding and otherwise realizing their art space. Furthermore, the preservation of 798 simultaneously initiated processes of valorization, commercialization and displacement. Clearly, the conflicts art spaces face are not limited to centralized

[42] Sheller/Urry (2006).
[43] Simone (2011); Amoore (2013).
[44] Markusen (2006); Markusen/Schrock (2006); Wojan/Dayton/McGranahan (2007); Martin-Brelot et al. (2010); Boren/Young (2013).
[45] O'Hagan/Hellmanzik (2008); Horowitz (2008); Barron (1997).
[46] Durrant/Lord (2007); Arareen (1989).
[47] Massey (1995); Schneekloth/Shibley (1995); Cresswell (2013).

urban planning, but about making a space in the city, the experience of the urban itself.

Especially in the context of the creativity imperative, which rarely elicits a coherent policy framework, the unplanned, everyday, informal modes of place-making are a deserving area of investigation.[48] A focus on interactions with urban planning as a state-driven and centralized set of policies would overlook urban contestations that deal with the everyday influence of mobility in shaping the city. Rather than seeking out urban planning conflicts, which enjoyed widespread attention in the media and in urban research like 798, I wanted to focus on everyday experiences. The research question therefore addresses the place-making practices that include these daily struggles and the strategies behind realizing art spaces.

Art spaces are a rich starting point for exploring questions about mobility and urban spatial consequences, as they hold a status in the city. Even if they are not Ai Wei Wei or Olafur Eliasson, artists continue to initiate spaces in the competitive urban landscape. How is it possible, for example, that art spaces who do not have a commercial gallery structure exist in a competitive urban context? How do they sustain their art spaces in a context of normalized displacement?

The research questions focus on understanding the place-making practices themselves:

- Why and how are art spaces made? What concepts, strategies and forms do they take?
- How do these place-making practices shape urban space? What do the spatial consequences of these place-making processes reveal about the territorialization of mobility and the urban spaces of possibility?

This project looks at the art space as a means to investigate modes of place-making in a context where creativity has gained enormous influence, and the consequences for understandings about (claims to) urban space. It does not contribute to the vast body of creative city literature, evaluating whether creativity-driven urban regeneration "works." Through its open-ended questions, and especially with respect to the comparative approach, the ensuing investigation aims to provide a path towards "theorizing back"[49] that is attentive to the seemingly contradictory need to be both context-specific and take theory-building as a generalizing activity. The creativity imperative has served to define new sites, validate new strategies, place new subjects and establish new stakes in the realm of competitive interurban relations.[50] Another

[48] From De Certeau to Simone and Robinson, the consequence of the "cultural turn" in geography is the elevated the position of the everyday, ordinary, lived experience of urban space within the discipline. See also Mitchell (2000); Holloway/Hubbard (2001); Bennett/Watson (2002).

[49] Ward (2009) p. 12.

[50] Peck (2005).

way to understand this impact is through the place-making practices that have subsequently arisen.

The following chapter will clarify in greater detail the definition of the case (the art space) and the selection of the sites (Beijing and Berlin), while also delineating the approach to empirically investigating these research questions. Furthermore, in operationalizing comparative urbanism, I establish a mode of comparison that is relational and holds a theory-building agenda close to its heart. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are based on the empirical results, and organized in terms of the conceptual motivations behind initiating art spaces, the practices of sustaining art spaces and the spatio-temporal consequences. Building on the interpretation of consequences for the city, Chapter 6 “theorizes back” to reconsider several assumptions about artists and urban space referenced in the empirical material. The myth of the urban frontier as a legitimation of conquest, is reconsidered through narratives of circulation. The urban frontier as a progressive possibility is displaced with empirically sourced alternative concepts of “cruise ship space” connected with ideas about the figure of the nomad, which reveals a specific kind of symbiotic, “phoretic” relationship between art spaces and the city. These concepts offer an alternative to understanding the relationship between the mobility of actors and resources, and their impact on the city. Finally, a reflection on the heuristic presentism of studying mobility is coupled with a call for more longitudinal methodologies.

Chapter 2

Operationalizing Comparative Urbanism

The approach being undertaken is experimental because it responds to a critical stance in urban theory, which does not offer explicit methodological instructions. It adopts comparative urbanism as a starting point for both methodology and theory-building. Comparative research has a long history in urban studies, but the comparative urbanism turn breaks with this body of work and critiques the parochial nature of urban theory in general. The critical stance that comparative urbanism takes towards urban theory is based on a diversity of premises, which will be briefly discussed in terms of geography, developmentalism and scientific method. Connecting these critiques with a broader ontology of the urban, a few concrete methodological starting points are defined.

As a further step towards operationalizing a critique, these tactics are applied to the research question in the selection of cases and sites, distinguishing the theoretical case being investigated from the sites in which the investigation takes place. The sites are comprised of microcosms of art spaces and artists; the narrow definition of these terms is important to understand biases as well as to underscore the possibility of connecting interactions among the empirical examples. This is framed in the grounded theory approach, which builds from the empirical material rather than testing hypotheses.

Though the research takes place in Berlin and Beijing, the ultimate goal is to contribute to understandings of mobility in urban contexts more broadly and to move beyond the “case-study.” Given this aim, a careful consideration of contextual specificity and incommensurability is necessary, and some attention must be given to the particularly isolating perspectives on exceptionalism that haunt both Berlin and Beijing. The purpose of the study is therefore not to enrich understandings of Berlin and Beijing as particular places per se, but to provide sufficient detail about these places in order to better understand the forms of mobility that are experienced in

cities through the making of art spaces. This establishes a mode of reading the empirical chapters that follow, which are grouped around themes and practices rather than location.

Finally, this chapter will describe the qualitative fieldwork undertaken, including an overview of the sites, basic analytical steps towards theory-building, notes on language and interview references. The justification for qualitative interviews and methods is established in relation to the research question. The overall purpose of the chapter should provide the reader with the impression that I am attempting to develop a methodological approach that takes comparative urbanism seriously.

2.1 Beyond critique, towards a methodology

Despite the various positions within debates about the renewed focus on comparative urbanism, there is some consensus that it holds substantial potential for enriching urban theory.[1] This consensus can be paraphrased in terms of its criticism of parochialism: Urban theory is largely developed out of a limited set of empirical sites, yet applied universally. Implicit in this consensus is a tacit understanding of comparative urbanism primarily as an instrument of critique of these limits of urban theory.

Comparative urbanism is an effort to challenge the epistemological trajectory of urban theory thus far, whereby authoritative knowledge about the urban becomes the "regulating fiction" of the first-world global city.[2] Thus, the spaces of theory are limited to these primary sites, whereas spaces of empirical research in other secondary sites are relegated to validating, elaborating or otherwise responding to prevailing canons of urban thought.[3] This renewed focus has enlivened perennial discussions around the connections between theory-making and empirical research, and has reinvigorated debates about disciplinary constraints.

This excitement has also shed light on the complexity of the critique and the unsettled exigencies of methodology. Beyond a rather basic consensus around the problem, comparative urbanism is fractured by divergent premises in the analysis of its origins. Understanding these premises is a first step towards developing potential methodological starting points. There are multiple explanations at play, not necessarily isolated from one another; I order them around issues of geography, developmentalism and scientific method.

Subsumed in the idea about parochialism is a condemnation of the limited geographical origins of urban theory. The location of theory, variously named "North," "West," "global," "developed," or "privileged," serve to delineate a rather bleak "map of urban

[1] Robinson (2002); Robinson (2003); Robinson (2005); Nijman (2007); Ward (2009); McFarlane (2010); Robinson (2011); Ren/Luger (2014); Robinson (2014).

[2] Roy (2011) p. 327.

[3] McFarlane (2008); Ren (2015).

theory."[4] This geographic myopia has been further deemed a disciplinary weakness, specific to urban theory:

> Urban theory has been slow in contributing to important advances in political, economic, social and cultural theories that have had a longer tradition of moving beyond theoretical agendas dominated by North American and European traditions. In these terms, urban theorists have tended to remain entrenched in conceptual and empirical approaches that have barely moved beyond the study of a small number of 'Western' cities, which act as the template against which all other cities are judged.[5]

The problem is defined in terms of the "Western" reference points in urban theory, that are also burdened with a certain kind of "Western" tradition. The critique would imply that another kind of theory would be possible if other, "non-Western" sites were to be included in theory-building. It follows that the limits of urban theory could be remedied by expanding the source of theory-making, to invest more in the theorization of what Seekings suggested as a "Southern urbanism."[6] The problem of parochialism is thus seen as an issue of geographic scope, which demands an "urgent" need to engage with sites from the "South."[7]

The deterministic constructions of both the "West" as well as the "South" in these critiques imply a serious risk of supplementing the existing parochialism with a new parochialism. Selecting sites oversimplifies the task laid out by the criticism inherent in comparative urbanism, and risks the oversimplification of the experience of cities[8] as well as the advancement of new parochialisms.[9] Though they are not easily written away due to their stubborn, on-going performative effect, "many urbanists do not themselves subscribe to these categories, and [make] efforts to blur notions of First/Third, Developed/Developing, or North/South. . . "[10] Indeed, the tendency towards essentializing difference and similarity has benefited from a serious examination in urban studies, which has also carried over to much of the comparative urbanism discussion.

Perniciously underlying these geographic determinations of difference and similarity is what comparative urbanism bemoans as the fallacy of developmentalism. In distinguishing comparative urbanism from previous modes of comparative research, therefore, there needs to be an increased attention to "avoid the shortcomings of scientism or the fallacies of developmentalism."[11] The fallacy of developmentalism

[4] McFarlane (2008) p. 341.
[5] Edensor/Jayne (2012) p. 1.
[6] Seekings' IJURR lecture at the RC21 conference in 2013 reflected the assumption that these critiques would be resolved by broadening the geography of theory-making, which would generate a different kind of theory about a different kind of urban form.
[7] Parnell/Pieterse/Watson (2009).
[8] Ma/Wu (2005) p. 11.
[9] Lin (2007); Ren/Luger (2014).
[10] McFarlane (2010) p. 728.
[11] Nijman (2007) p. 3.

assumes a "hierarchical categorization" that divides cities based on ideas about development, which "continues to form the basis for urban studies to this day, in which different kinds of cities are broadly thought to be incommensurable."[12] This assumes, for example, that a certain city cannot yet be compared with another because it has not caught up in terms of its development. Illustrative of this form of developmentalism are comparative works that relegate the "Third World" sites as indefinitely catching up.[13]

The dissection of "fallacies of developmentalism" borrows from postcolonial and feminist scholarship, which provides an incisive view of the history of these modes of schematizing places and maps based on essentializing binary differences. Geographic descriptions like "North" and "South" are not neutral cartographic coordinates,[14] but rather subsumed in constellations of power and colonial histories.[15] The problem of relegating places to a "Southern" elsewhere or "other" becomes a means of reifying what Simone terms "invented latitudes."[16] These invented latitudes also allude to Said and Gregory's works on "imaginative geographies," tied to representations of "other" places conceived through often patronizing depictions or "spaces of constructed visibility."[17] These invented latitudes or imagined geographies are counterposed in an irreducible dichotomy.[18]

These issues of developmentalism are further exacerbated by the politics of knowledge production ensconced in the epistemology of urban marginality. This is a landscape of knowledge production that subscribes to ideas of center and periphery. Walton and Masotti voiced this concern when they argued that one source of parochialism is the researcher who "venture[s] into 'foreign' settings with a prefabricated set of theories and methodological tools which presupposed the order and meaning of events."[19] This resonates with Lindner's history of urban studies in which the urban researcher is perennially seeking out the "other."[20] Said more specifically made explicit that "the authority of the observer, and of European geographical centrality, is buttressed by a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status."[21] Similarly, Yeoh

[12] Robinson (2006) p. 41.

[13] In their study of Southeast Asian cities, for example, Dick and Rimmer identify moments where Asian cities "already" become more like Western cities in different periods of transition (1998).

[14] Anderson's outlining of the construction of "Southeast Asia" as a cultural, political place on a map shows how postcolonial research can provide insights into the political origins of these geographies (1998).

[15] Said (1993); Anderson (1998).

[16] Simone (2010) p. 14.

[17] Said (1978); Gregory (1994); Gregory (2000).

[18] In adjacent disciplines, postcolonial critiques have often focused on the irreducibility of these dichotomies between colonizer and colonized as manifested through literature. Spivak (2006(1987)); Spivak (2003); Bhaba (2004(1994)) A generation of feminist and queer scholarship has focused on dismantling binary modes of social interpretation. See e.g. Butler (1990); Massey (1995).

[19] Walton/Masotti (1976) p. 2.

[20] Lindner (2004).

[21] Said (1993) p. 70.

stresses the need to "destabilize dominant discourses of the metropolitan west."[22] Jacobs makes explicit the complicity of geography as a discipline in constructing this uneven landscape, asking: "How can the spatial discipline of geography move from its historical positioning of colonial complicity towards productively postcolonial spatial narratives?"[23]

Following in this line of questioning, there is a shift from the criticism of parochialism and developmentalism towards asking how the discipline could move forward. What kind of methodologies are required and which are possible? Postcolonial scholarship provides a rich lens of criticism and textual interpretation. For instance, postcolonial scholars in comparative literature like Spivak, Bhaba Young and Dabashi have long explored ways of reading and interpreting texts that have produced seminal concepts like hybridity, rethinking ideas about translation, and transforming the analysis of subject formation in the figure of the subaltern.[24] In her incisive critique of comparative literature, *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak suggests:

> approaching the language of the other not only as a 'field' language... We must take the languages of the Southern Hemisphere as active cultural media rather than as objects of cultural study by the sanctioned ignorance of the metropolitan migrant.[25]

These ideas of displacing irreducible difference with "irreducible hybridity" implies a way of reading literature and interpreting language that treats the material as something dynamic rather than static.[26]

Though urban researchers work with and in text form, they do not deal exclusively with texts, but also with space. While appreciating the potential to borrow tools for analysis and interpretation from a multiplicity of disciplines, spatial engagement poses some fundamental questions: "What should be compared, where, at what scales and in what ways?"[27] Turning from these premises based on issues of geography and developmentalism, there are concerns about basic scientific method that preoccupy many scholars of comparative urbanism.

This third premise of the comparative urbanism critique argues that comparative methodology based on disciplinary tradition and research design are themselves limiting constraints for urban theory. Traditional modes of comparative research are predicated on assumptions about similarity, difference, and other forms of "formal equivalence" presumed necessary for causal explanations.[28] The challenge of commensurability for choosing comparative sites is connected to ambitions to draw out

[22] Yeoh (2001) p. 457.

[23] Jacobs (1996) p. 15.

[24] In fact, Roy has argued for postcolonial criticism to be applied as a "deconstructive methodology" (2011) p. 308. See also Young (2003); Dabashi (2004).

[25] Spivak (2003) p. 9.

[26] Or, as Spivak puts it in note 1 on her chapter about planetarity, it's an approach that prefers *poieses* over *istoria* (2003: 114).

[27] Ren/Luger (2014) p. 145.

[28] Pickvance (1986); Ward (2009); Robinson (2011).

the causal inferences that establish "law-like explanation" through controlling for as many variables as possible.[29] Out of this causal imperative came typologies of comparative research design, like Tilly's often cited individualizing, universalizing, encompassing and variation-finding typologies.[30]

In her schematization of Tilly's typologies (Cf. Figure 2.1), Robinson integrates other interpretations[31] and illustrations to explain the merits of each.[32] Her discussion focuses on the causality assumptions of each approach. The individualizing comparison is essentially a detailed case study, which explains the distinctive, unique properties of each case. This approach is able to encapsulate more historical and contextual factors in its explanations, but can also serve to reduce the relevance of one case for other cases. Universalizing approaches seek out a general universally applicable rule or explanation and often rely on different cases to defend the universality. The encompassing comparison assumes that cases are part of a broader systemic process, like capitalism or globalization. While it allows for connections between cases, the site selections often re-inscribe hierarchies of global or world cities that render certain cities incommensurable. Variation-finding comparison mostly focuses on similar cases to find variations of experiences with regards to an existing theory. Building on Pickvance, however, Robinson also advocates for comparisons across difference as a means to overcome modes of ethnocentrism often implicit in single, universal causality assumptions.

With degrees of difference, the basis for comparison relies on difference and similarity. The outcome was to compare only within certain areas, at certain scales, to be careful about being able to control for enough variables in order to write a causal narrative. All of these criteria for selecting comparative sites are restrictive in nature and selecting comparative sites based on these approaches has resulted in a deficit for urban theory.

To summarize, comparative urbanism is a critical stance towards the parochialism of urban theory. It is not a call for doing urban research in under-researched sites, but about responding to the various barriers towards "theory-building across the world of cities."[33] These include the geographic origins of theory, the developmentalist fallacies underlying site-selection and the established comparative methodologies whose site selection primarily focused on causal assumptions. Attendant to this critique is a need for new approaches: "What is needed is an analytically nimble and possibly experimental suite of comparative methods."[34]

In order to operationalize the critique, and before offering some methodological starting points, it is useful to briefly consider the theory-building agenda at the core

[29] Nijman (2007) p. 5.
[30] Tilly (1984).
[31] Lijphart (1971); Pickvance (1986); Brenner (2001).
[32] Robinson (2011).
[33] Ibid., p. 19.
[34] Ibid., p. 13.

Table 1 Summary of urban comparative strategies and causality assumptions

	Comparative Strategy/Basis for Selection	Causality Assumptions
Cannot compare	None	Plural and incommensurable
Individualizing	Implicit Any city Case studies not always comparative or theory-building	Historical and specific
Universalizing	Most similar or most different	Search for a general rule (universal)
Encompassing	Involvement in common systemic processes; often assumption of convergence as basis for comparison	Universal but potentially differentiated processes of incorporation into and impact of system
Variation-finding	Most similar: explain systematic variations within broadly similar contexts on basis of variables held constant or changing	Universal
	Most different	Either: search for universal causality across different contexts based on similar outcomes Or: pluralist causalities (Pickvance, 1986)

Figure 2.1: Based on Tilly's typologies, Robinson summarizes the strategies and causality assumptions underlying each comparative approach. The last row is inspired by Pickvance (1986) whose approach towards variation-finding selects cases that are most different in order to overcome ethnocentrism implicit in single, universal causality. Robinson (2011), p. 5.

of comparative urbanism. The preceding discussion about causality assumptions constraining comparative methodology suggests that practices of theory-building rely on certain understandings of theory that would benefit from a more "relaxed approach."[35] Therefore, as an experimental mode of operationalizing the critique, grounded theory is adopted as an approach towards theory-building.[36] This implies that rather than deducing hypotheses from existing theories, the theoretical concepts developed from this project originate from the qualitative fieldwork. Existing concepts, theories and research help render the empirical research intelligible (certain epistemological limits seem inescapable), but the theoretical contributions in Chapter 6 are empirically sourced.

Therefore, rather than conceiving of theory as "rules" that are universally applicable, the following work borrows from anthropological traditions that situate theory between universal law and description.[37] The ideas that are developed from this project, based on qualitative fieldwork covering a very narrow selection of cases and sites, can nonetheless serve as theory understood as a sensitizing scheme rather than explanation.[38] It aims towards the mid-range rather than the universal, which also frames the following methodological steps.

Methodological starting points

There are some methodological starting points embedded in the ontological treatment of the urban. In the preceding discussion of comparative methods, there is a reliance on comparing cities somehow ascribed with similarities or differences (scalar, political structure, economic system, history, etc.), which forces the researcher to take these characteristics as static rather than practiced.[39] These modes of relying on similarity and difference between bounded, discrete containers clash with urban theorizations that are more fluid and relational.

A first starting point would be to understand the urban as a relationally constituted site, assuming the view that " places are what they are in part precisely as a result of their history of and present participation in relations with elsewhere."[40] The urban is a "particular articulation of those relations"[41] and urban sites are not "analytically separate objects" isolated from one another.[42] This ontology of the urban requires a mode of comparison that views places in connection with one another. This relational approach serves to complicate the dominant ontological basis of a territorially defined urban site. Relationality does not displace territoriality as a starting point, but rather

[35] Harding/Blokland (2014) p. 1.
[36] Glaser/Strauss (1967).
[37] Ong/Collier (2005); Ong (2011).
[38] Hedstrom/Swedberg (1998).
[39] Ward (2009) p. 9.
[40] Massey (2011) p. 4.
[41] Massey (1995) p. 5.
[42] Ward (2009) p. 9.

serves as a complementary frame.[43] As Jacobs has described sites connected to global processes, "this is not the proper place of bounded, pre-given essences, it is an unbound geography of difference and contest."[44] The constitutive elements defining the urban are contested and practiced, based in relations with elsewhere and not rooted in categories of static characteristics.[45]

Dovey's discussion of place and assemblage is useful here in thinking about the urban site as a place constantly in a process of becoming. She contends:

> Place is a term that I have argued is largely synonymous with assemblage, indeed theories of place can be rescued from the charge of essentialism by replacing stabilized and essentialist Heideggerian ontology of being-in-the-world with a more Deleuzian notion of becoming-in-the-world.[46]

For Dovey, the critical potential of assemblage thinking is about understanding urban change as a process, which does not reduce its complexity by seeking out essentializing forms of "root causes." This is compatible with an ontology of the urban as something complex, dynamic and constituted in relation to other places rather than a concept of the urban as isolated, authentic, categorically bounded containers.

A second methodological starting point would be to think about the urban and urban processes in a localized site as situated within a constellation of global flows or mobilities. Here Urry and Castells offer some insights about concepts of bundling, nodes and concentrations as it might be applied to the urban. But rather than serving as a derivative node of global flow or as poles of attraction,[47] the urban researcher might insist on the priority of territoriality in understanding mobility. Indeed, that the localized site defines the global flow; it would only be through studying the site that the researcher can begin to understand the flow.[48] An example of this is Ley's research of "transnational space," which illustrates how looking at globally mobile actors shatters notions that the global flow of elite freedom can be separated from a local everyday life.[49]

The "new mobilities paradigm" provides a lens through which to interpret interconnections in a way that can account better for dynamic processes (rather than the static characterizations described above) while remaining committed to territory.[50] This approach refocuses on modes of reterritorializing mobility, what has been described as "spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings" or "spatial fix."[51] Hannam Sheller and Urry have surmised that the "liquid modernity" that mobilities re-

[43] McCann/Ward (2010); Massey (2011).
[44] Jacobs (1996) p. 36.
[45] For a lengthier discussion about forms of categories that serve as bases for site selection see Ren/Luger (2014).
[46] Dovey (2011) p. 348.
[47] Urry (2007); Castells (2010).
[48] Ong (2011).
[49] Ley (2004).
[50] Sheller/Urry (2006).
[51] Harvey (1989); Hannam/Sheller/Urry (2006).

search is often associated with is always accompanied by rhizomic attachments and a diversity of reterritorializations.[52] Indeed, it would be a means of reconciling some ideas from assemblage urbanism (See Dovey above) with the criticism of its lack of contextual relevance.[53]

Thus, there are two compatible starting points related to this ontological treatment of the urban: the relational comparison and the localized site.[54] In fact, Ward's relational approach "recognizes both the territorial and the relational histories and geographies that are behind their production and (re)production."[55] It is also compatible with social scientists who have long argued for an approach to studying cultural processes that transcend bordered sites while still taking seriously local vernaculars of a place.[56] Given this understanding, a primary mode of comparison will be to seek out connections and interactions. A more clear definition of this tactic is possible after discussing the research at hand.

2.2 Cases, sites and clustering connections

The approach undertaken in the present study attempts to build on this mode of studying localized sites as a means to understand global flows vaguely speaking, and comparing these sites on relational terms. It is in part reminiscent of the "encompassing" approach to comparison, but a clarification of case and site-selection will serve to distinguish this as a concrete step in operationalizing comparative urbanism.

The starting point and theoretical case was to look at the place-making practices of creating art spaces in Berlin and Beijing. Following Walton, this sets out with an idea of the theoretical case as a "case of something."[57] The present study employs the art space as a representation of a meaningful *place* reflecting "articulations of social relations" being constantly renegotiated.[58] Furthermore, these articulations represent multiple forms of mobility pertaining to ideas, resources and actors, all interconnected. The art space offers a lens through which to interpret the spatial consequences these various forms of mobility have on the city. The theoretical contributions about the city based on an understanding about these place-making practices are then considered in Chapter 6.

To make the open-ended research question of "how are art spaces made?" tenable for research design, the case is limited by narrow terms. Art spaces were de-

[52] Shurmer-Smith/Hannam (1994); Baumann (2000); Sheller (2004); Hannam/Sheller/Urry (2006).
[53] Brenner/Madden/Wachsmuth (2011).
[54] This is further reiterated by McCann and Ward in discussing mobile urbanism, that the city is constituted by both territorial and relational geographies (2011). See also Ward (2009); McCann/Ward (2010); Massey (2011).
[55] Ward (2009) p. 10.
[56] Clifford (1997); Werbner/Modood (1997).
[57] Walton (2005).
[58] Massey (1995); Schneekloth/Shibley (1995); Cresswell (2013).

fined as spaces for artistic production, eliminating exhibition venues like museums and most commercial galleries. A semi-public component was also part of the selection, eliminating artists' personal living and studio spaces. This implies that the examples are largely artist-run spaces, which do not have a gallery-based commercial structure. In other words, they are not vendors of art, but employ variety of funding strategies through mixed uses of their space, applications to public funding, direct resource transfers and negotiations for lowered rent prices and other costs.

A last specification about art spaces relates to the artists, curators, directors and managers themselves should be made. Because observational and collected materials were integrated with interviews, these individuals were an important means towards understanding the processes involved in making these spaces. Due to the complexity of understanding place-making activities, often including practices in the past or meanings requiring explanation, and also due to a lack of secondary material on the vast majority of these art spaces, qualitative interviews were of central importance. Interviews were established through a mixed approach of researching networks, publications, online platforms, and snowball sampling. More detail on the fieldwork follows in the next section.

While mobility is central to this project, specifically "foreign" interview partners were not sought out in order to establish their coming from "elsewhere." Indeed the range of forms of mobility were significant and, due to the small sample, unclear how it was connected to nationality. Certainly, some nationalities enjoy greater mobility than others due to visa requirements and there are biases resulting from these legal restrictions. This was not an ethnographic study, however, so the interviews did not focus on biographies of the interview partners, but rather the interview served as an additional means to understand the practices of making the art space. By not focusing on "essentialist notions of identity," the hope is to produce a narrative about place-making that "destabilises a whole range of claims for rights over space which are argued through the idea of origin."[59] In doing so, it departs from the enormous literature on migration and the city.[60]

This broader conceptualization of mobility will be evident in the following chapters, illustrated through routine movements as part of their personal, professional and social lives. The art space as a modus to study mobility seems at the outset to be highly fruitful, as places of education, production, exhibition, festivals and residencies that often require the physical mobility of the artist, of resources and ideas. It seemed like a rich case to investigate the underlying processes behind the 798 example described in the introduction. What kind of relevance does the hackneyed cliché of creativity in the city have for art spaces?[61]

Yet the framing of the case also alludes to some attendant biases with regards

[59] Jacobs (1996) p. 163.

[60] In migration research, forms of mobility in the city are largely connected to ideas of ethnic difference. This often has little to do with actual mobility and more to do with issues of difference and belonging. See e.g. the collected essays on Berlin in Färber (2005) and cf. Smith1992a.

[61] Peck (2005).

to the empirical examples. For instance, because they are also spaces of artistic production and not only commercial venues, there is perhaps an even greater need for creative strategies. By focusing interviews on space-makers in a specific time, the descriptions of art space making are heavily reliant on their personal subjective interpretation of these processes. Largely undocumented, these processes are described often from a singular point of view and not corroborated by published accounts or broader surveys.

Having determined a case rich in potential theorizations, how should sites be selected? This is where more traditional modes of comparative research might rely on a schematization of characteristics to showcase contextual similarity and difference. If these justifications are no longer called upon, however, which selection criteria should comparative researchers use? How can site selection avoid being arbitrary and escape "throwing 'into the hopper' all cities at all times from all over to see which traits and isolated characteristics appear congruent or divergent"?[62] I begin with two cities rich in art spaces, with which I am at least familiar, having conducted previous research there, being a resident or frequent visitor, and conversant in the local languages: Beijing and Berlin.

Selecting Berlin and Beijing implies several issues. At the most basic, it is naming two cities that presumes a certain scalar characteristic. As the following chapters show, however, the art spaces are being produced on a neighborhood scale whose contextual characteristics often cannot be generalized about either city as a whole. On the other hand, they make reference to land use and real estate policies or processes that often transcend Berlin and Beijing's governance structures. Given these scalar promiscuities, the names "Berlin" and "Beijing" are signifiers of a multitude of scalar processes that result from sociospatial contestations.[63] Naming these cities is not irrelevant, but the ultimate goal is not to provide a local guide to either place.

Even if issues of incommensurability are ignored in favor of a more relational interpretation of comparison, Berlin and Beijing are both further burdened with the specter of exceptionalism. In the context of research about China, the issue of exceptionalism is the lazy explanation for all manner of urban chimera as well as reflective of the challenge urban China researchers face in relating Chinese cities.[64] The concept of Chinese exceptionalism as an explanatory instrument restricts the potential of drawing theoretical interpretations of research in urban China; it is a serious barrier towards theory-building. Historical singularities are compounded with issues of scale, scope and speed (nothing else transforms at such a scale, affecting so many people, so fast, and so on.)[65]

Berlin is similarly burdened with a 20th century history like no other city, including

[62] Abu-Lughod (1976) p. 21.
[63] Brenner (2004).
[64] Logan/Fainstein (2008); Kong/O'Connor (2009).
[65] Pow (2012).

post-war occupation, decades-long division followed by political reunification. The post-1989 transitions Berlin faced, "the transition to a united city after a history of conflict and division; the transition to a capital city in a nation defining its national identity; the transition from a socialist to a capitalist city; and the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial or post-Fordist metropolis" were simultaneous and sudden.[66] Despite its "exceptional history over half a century after World War Two"[67] or claims that it "has too many historical specificities" to qualify it as a "paradigmatic city,"[68] both Hall and Colomb readily assert that the transitions and problems faced by Berlin are not unique to Berlin.

Indeed, the experience of neither city exists in perfect isolation, despite their tremendous histories. Just as there is a need to bring "down the 'Asian City' from its mythical pedestal, the imagined place of hyper-skylines and sleek postmodernity, and reject the exceptionalism of the 'Asian City,' which renders it incommensurate as a site of comparison,"[69] there is a similar need to bring Berlin in conversation with other places. Without negating the contextual specificities of the alleys of Heizhima Hutong in Beijing or the banks of the Panke River in Berlin, it is possible and potentially enriching to look at how place-making practices in these cities relate to one another.

By establishing a broader ontology of the urban, it does not posit Berlin and Beijing as exceptional counterparts and models of extraordinary world cities. Rather, they are "ordinary cities" in the world.[70] This opens the possibility for comparative research to be a foundation for theory-building. No other city in the world has the exact constellation of alleys and rivers or precise demographic makeup of any other place. But the transitions, the processes, and the place-making activities attest to the principle that cities are constantly being made in relation to elsewhere. The concepts that originate from a study of these activities serve to generate some theoretical ideas about the urban, as will be explored in Chapter 6.

Clustering connections

Having sketched out the case (place-making of art spaces) and the sites (Berlin and Beijing), one further methodological instrument is required as related to comparative interpretation. If the goal of the research is not seeking to understand how the sites are the same or different from one another, what is the mode of comparison? Though the empirical material constitutes the makings of a classic qualitative methodology with interviews, observational notes, gathered print materials and photography, there needs to be a procedure for organizing and interpreting the material.

In pursuit of a method of comparison that tries to escape the tendency to isolate

[66] Colomb (2012b) p. 7.
[67] Hall (2013).
[68] Colomb (2012b) p. 7.
[69] Ren/Luger (2014) p. 10.
[70] Robinson (2006).

bounded places from one another, the empirical material was deliberately organized in order to seek out connections or "pockets of interactions"[71] evidenced in the practices of the art spaces. As I transcribed the interviews, I also tagged and clustered examples around recurrent themes, a conventional mode of analyzing qualitative data also compatible with grounded theory practices of empirical interpretation.[72] The thematic ordering process was a means to construct some narratives about the place-making practices. Following the clustering of results, the empirical chapters were structured around conceptual motivations, practices and consequences, which is the structure of the following chapters. This did not follow the structure of the interviews, but seemed to be the most clear way to highlight the multiplicity of experiences. Still, the empirical material was not always easily separated in these three categories, as will be evident in the overlapping issues.

In structuring the empirical material about the art spaces, the attempt was to operationalize a relational mode of comparison that is less concerned with discovering how something is like or unlike, but how they are connected. The examples were not divided by city, but by common themes in an attempt to write relationally. Of course in seeking out these connections, the narratives skew towards art spaces and actors that can not escape resemblances. Indeed, the selection of mobility as a topic of research itself privileges forms of mobility in favor of immobility, ultimately inflating the importance of mobility.[73] The same can be applied to the focus on interaction, which might inflate the sense of interconnection over examples that do not speak to one another. Where possible, counter examples and examples of contradiction were included.

Importantly, seeking out connections as a mode of comparison does not help to establish a singular, representative standard of place-making with regards to art spaces. Rather, the goal of threading together these experiences is precisely to thwart the idea of archetype, which coincides with establishing an ultimate point of reference, conclusively differentiating original and borrowed urbanisms.[74] There is no site relegated to the "urban shadow" of theorization, which has been made peripheral in the course of research design.[75] Clustering connections as a method is about attempting a more balanced narrative, for "decentering the reference points for international scholarship"[76] through an analytical method of engaging with empirical material.

[71] Thrift (2003) p. 109.

[72] This is such an established mode of interpreting interview material in the social sciences, that software has now been developed to aid in this coding process. This software was not used for the present study. Rather, standard integration of LaTeX and BibTeX software for structuring and cross-referencing was used. An expanded discussion of coding practices in grounded theory literature is not directly relevant here except to say that the tags used for empirical material were not pre-given, but emergent during the transcription process. See e.g. Glaser/Strauss (1967).

[73] These issues of presentism and selection biases related to the selection of mobility as a research topic is discussed in in Chapter 6.

[74] Roy (2011) p. 309-310.

[75] McFarlane (2008).

[76] Robinson (2006) p. 169.

Threading experiences together provides a mode of comparison for the following empirical chapters, and while theory-building from these findings will be the task delegated to the final chapter, there are some interpretive considerations for theory-building worth mentioning at the outset. As an analytical instrument, it's useful to keep in mind how this mode of comparison can "unsettle and destabilize knowledge and theory as it is produced."[77] Though comparative urbanism is a critical turn, McFarlane offers the reminder that there is nothing intrinsically progressive or anti-essentialist in comparison itself. In theorizing back, I eventually consider what spaces are made visible through this approach and how these spaces of possibility might contribute to urban theory. The critical potential of comparative urbanism rests on a continual reflection about the contributions it makes to existing modes and existing models. This echoes Chakrabarty's call to provincialize Europe, not as a call to rush to non-European sites for exploration, but as a way to reflect on the lens with which we look at all cities.[78] It also carries into the newer call to "provincialize global urbanism" as a means to recognize the biased empirical foundations on which global ideas often rest.[79]

To summarize, this mode of comparison takes comparative urbanism as a methodologically oriented critique. It addresses *how* sites are compared not what is compared. Even as it serves to enrich urban theory, it does not fundamentally discard with all theoretical concepts simply because they have been generated from a limited set of sites and through a limited lens. Furthermore, these knowledges are provincialized in the present study not in an epistemological interrogation about the history of urban studies, but through a contribution that seeks to rebalance the narrative and decenter the reference points.

2.3 Qualitative fieldwork

As a last step towards concretizing the approach, some details about the qualitative fieldwork will help to make the empirical chapters more legible. As alluded to in the introduction, the qualitative choice was made in order to investigate the practices of place-making. Ethnographic and geographic information systems (GIS) approaches were both by-passed for a number of reasons. An ethnographic approach, though enriching, would have produced a biography of the individuals not necessarily addressing the research questions about how the space is made. Though certainly biographic and professional information is included where relevant, a full personal history was not the goal of the research. Other more spatially-oriented methodologies like a GIS-based approach would have been impossible to design given the lack

[77] McFarlane (2010) p. 738.
[78] Chakrabarty (2000).
[79] Sheppard/Maringanti (2013).

of information at the outset. Because there is so little information about the practices of making these art spaces, a more open, "qualitatively driven" fieldwork that also integrated print materials was indispensable.[80]

While 45 art spaces were investigated in the course of the research, not all met the selection criteria perfectly and not all will be directly referenced. As a reminder, art spaces were defined as spaces of artistic production with a semi-public component. Artistic production will be discussed at length in the following chapter, but was left for the interviewees to define. In other words, I did not determine whether art was actually being produced. Rather, this selection criteria was determined from the interviewees' point of view. However, there were a few interviews and art spaces included where it became clear during the course of the interview that their art space was more a traditional venue or exhibition space. These are still included in Appendix A because they often still served to inform my understanding of the areas where they were located. They are not cited in the ensuing chapters, and not listed among the primary sources in Appendix B.

The interviews were a key component of the qualitative work. It is often only through the position of the actors that place-making activities could be made intelligible. The interviews took place in 2012, over the period of about three months in Berlin and Beijing, respectively. The 51 interviews were between one to three hours in duration and were based on a semi-structured questioning about their practices and projections about their future. Those cited are listed in Appendix B. The questioning mostly followed a chronological history, describing how the spaces were initiated and then the various experiences and practices collected. Though the definition of art space is rather narrow, there remained a high degree of diversity in terms of the extent of their experiences (temporally and spatially), which the semi-structured interview could accommodate for. Because the interview often followed a tour of the space, many details from the tour were included in observational field notes rather than audio-recorded interviews.

The site visits that accompanied the interviews were informative in understanding the aesthetic layout of the art space, the material spatiality, the proximities between the art space and direct surroundings, as well as helping to better interpret the interviews, which usually took place directly at the art space. Photographs were taken and some are included in the following chapters, but more often served as reference points in the analysis of the material. The photographs documented the art spaces themselves, but also the surrounding areas. Several short videos were also taken, which helped to enrich the material with sound and movement. Due to the textual limitations of the present work, however, these served more as references for the analysis. During the visits and interviews, available print materials were collected. These include catalogues, event fliers, and books that may have been published about the spaces.[81]

[80] Mason (2006).

[81] Appendix B includes cited materials. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by the au-

Following the initial visits and interviews, events were visited when possible to experience the art space with a broader public. These events were mostly openings of shows, which fell within the fieldwork period. The events were a period where the semi-public relevance of the art space could be witnessed. While some spaces had opening hours, many were only open to the public during events. Therefore, attending events was a meaningful way to experience some of the art spaces as they are intended for a public.

The transcription process was an important part of the analysis and interpretation, because of the clustering as described above. All the interviews were therefore described personally by myself and integrated into a shared, searchable content management system where keywords were established. The interpretation of the clustered connections was simultaneous to the transcription process and continued through the writing. Because of the content management system where all transcripts were searchable, the emergence of new themes in the course of transcription and writing underwent a constant process of revision. In other words, and to reiterate, tags, themes or codes were not set at the beginning of the analysis process. Rather, these emerged through the transcription and writing. This implies that the analysis was rather inductive, but not strictly so. As mentioned in the previous section, concepts and literature helped me in interpreting the empirical works and are integrated along the way. This may reinforce certain epistemological limits, but ultimately serves to provide a richer understanding of the place-making process of these art spaces –from their motivations rooted in art concepts through their strategies and the spatio-temporal consequences.

Another issue of the qualitative fieldwork worth noting relates to language and formatting. The interviews were conducted in three languages, English, German and Mandarin, though mostly in English and mostly with non-native English speakers. This was the case for both cities. So, speaking about *guanxi* in Beijing with a native Italian-speaker in English reflects the socio-linguistic complexity of many of these interviews. This will be evident in terms of syntax, reference points and grammar. Where German or Mandarin terms are used in an English interview, they have been kept in the original. The linguistic style is reflective of the code-switching that interview partners often felt they could engage in with the interviewer (me). I can speak German and some Mandarin but speak English with an American accent and was often asked about my Chinese-American background as well as my residency and institutional affiliation in Germany.[82] Also because the interview partners were themselves often not native German nor Mandarin speakers, English was still most often the preferred language for the interview. These notes on language are significant, as they reflect the borrowing of concepts from various contexts in various languages, not always related to the place where the interview is taking place.

Therefore, in the interview citations of English-language interviews, grammati-

thor.

[82] For an overview of code-switching in sociolinguistics, see e.g. Gumperz/Hymes (1972); Auer (2013).

cal correctness has been foregone for fidelity to these complex modes of referencing. Interviews conducted in German or Mandarin have been translated into English by myself and with support from a professional translator for some of the Mandarin. Mandarin-language interviews were also conducted with support from a native speaker. Though these linguistic considerations are probably worthy of a significant analysis separate from the present work, this brief overview will hopefully help the reader in understanding the interview excerpts used in the text.

In terms of interview citation, the names of interview partners are anonymized, but the art space names are included. The names of the spaces are often themselves illustrative, and an important component of their individuality, not easily renamed. No interview partners asked for their art space to be unnamed. While the vast majority of interviews were conducted with artists or curators involved in founding or initiating the spaces, there are a few instances where interviews were conducted with artists or curators who were utilizing the space, but not involved in initiating or managing the daily operations of the art space. These differences are relevant to the analysis, and therefore an individualized acronym was established for each interview:

1. O=owner, founder, manager, curator, artist with authority over the daily operations of the space

   A=artist who uses space, without authority over daily operations or curation

   C=curator of space, not tied exclusively to the space

2. BL=Berlin, BJ=Beijing

3. Enumeration

So, for example, “OBJ1” would be an interview conducted with someone who is involved in running a space in Beijing. See Appendix A for a full list of art spaces included in the present research and Appendix B for a list of cited interviews and other referenced material.

To summarize, the present approach is broad in its ontology of the urban, yet narrow in terms of defining cases, sites and the mode of comparison. Rather than using qualitative methodologies to primarily seek out authentic localisms,[83] they are applied towards clustering connections between sites. This is a means to account for the dynamism of the places being compared. Moreover, by focusing on the practices of place-making, “the emphasis is not on causation per se, but rather on causal powers and liabilities.”[84] It relaxes the need for law-like explanation in favor of focusing on the “promiscuous borrowings, shameless juxtapositions, and strategic enrollments of disparate ideas, actors, and practices from many sources circulating in the developing world, and beyond.”[85]

[83] Geertz (1973); Geertz (1983).
[84] Ward (2009) p. 10.
[85] Ong (2011) p. 23.

This is an attempt to operationalize comparative urbanism by presenting alternative modes of conceptualizing the urban as an object of study, a specific justification for case and site-selection, as well as clustering connections as a tactic of comparison. Designing an approach around comparative urbanism suggests that it can function as more than just a critical, discursive or political tool, but also as a framework for doing research.

Of course, theorizing back in the final chapter will consider how this approach works for theory-building. Does the comparative work ultimately contest "existing claims in urban theory, expanding the range of debate and informing new perspectives"?[86] Or does the openness of this approach elicit a multiplicity of stories that become untenable for theory-building? The following empirical chapters may help to delineate the scope of its potential.

[86] McFarlane (2010) p. 726.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Motivations – Art Space

In the early 1970s, Joseph Beuys began ascribing his artistic work with an expanded understanding of what art is, becoming one of the first postwar artists to:

> Employ sculpture as a spatial metaphor for the interrelatedness of society. His complex theory and practice epitomized how process renders transparent the relationship between thought, behavior and social systems... He referred to his work as "social sculpture" the term he used to emphasize the plastic dimension of thought and its connection to action in the social construction of lived reality.[1]

In exploring the motivations behind art spaces that are also spaces of artistic production, the Beuysian influence is overwhelming. Beginning with ideas about how these art spaces envision themselves as social sculptures, this chapter explores the spectrum of motivations ranging from utopian or apathetic isolationism to locational immersions lionizing ideas of history, community and social responsibility.

Introducing the art spaces through their conceptual motivations is one way to simultaneously show the connectedness of art spaces across different contexts in Berlin and Beijing, as well as the diverse ways that these connections can be made. Following Livingston, this chapter assumes that the motivations, like stated intentions, have various consequences that do not necessarily follow in desired or targeted results.[2] Explaining these motivations is not a prerequisite for analyzing the place-making practices subsumed in realizing these art spaces. Non-representational theorists would rather insist on focusing on the practices and the making-of, rather than the "social meaning projected on the urban landscape, which [is] insufficient to understand the actual use and occupation of urban space."[3] Still Chapters 3 and 4

[1] Stiles (1996) p. 583.
[2] Livingston (1998) p. 831.
[3] Hubbard (2006) p. 126.

seek to present both the articulated artistic motivations as well as the practices, providing a more "stereoscopic vision" integrating both perspectives.[4] In many ways, this chapter also offers a glimpse into the different rationalities underpinning the practices discussed in Chapter 4. Taking conceptual motivations and practice in tandem, the meanings ascribed to these spaces become existential, and not simply descriptive.[5]

These artistic concepts help define the kind of art space that is being made. Understanding the various motivations behind these spaces will help elucidate their ideological nature, and the conceptual downgrading of the significance of materiality and physical space, all highly relevant for a more holistic analysis of their place-making practices. The concept of ideology is reduced here to artistic ideologies, and focus even more specifically on those concepts that reject the dualism of art and the everyday as they "leave the gallery and enter everyday space."[6] This dualism[7] is based on artists' experience of "a conflict between their role as social critics and their dependency upon an existing hierarchical social formation to sustain their position as part of an elite, specialized group of cultural workers."[8] This dualism of art and everyday is continually resolved in the course of making these art spaces. These resolutions, meanings and rationalizations in explaining their art space constitute the artistic ideologies underlying the kind of place being made. As a bridge into the mundane practices and everyday banalities[9] that constitute practices of place-making, it is important to acknowledge the artistic ideologies in which an art space is also an everyday space.

The art spaces presented here are meaningful places that reject the separation of art space from everyday space. The conflation of art-making and space-making, the depreciation of materiality in favor of process, the aspirations for utopic islands, the nostalgic romanticizations, and the contradictory tendencies towards indifference all mark some of the key motivations underlying the making of these art spaces. In order to understand the "how" of the place-making process, it is useful to begin with "why." Why are these art spaces made?

3.1 Social sculpture processes

Sitting on wooden benches in their foliage-rich courtyard shared with the children of an adjacent apartment building playing in a sandbox, one of the founders of Agora Collective explains:

> Joseph Beuys is a big inspiration. . . He described social sculpture and it's

[4] Helbrecht (2004).
[5] Also cf. Hall (1997) and Thrift (1997).
[6] Bonnett (1992) p. 83.
[7] See also Miles (1997) p. 165.
[8] For instance, Adorno's (1973) interrogation of the relationship of cultural production and creativity, and commerce. Bonnett (1992) p. 71.
[9] Thrift (1997).

> kind of in a way what we're doing here is a social sculpture. This whole process is an art piece itself.[10]

As a multi-functional art, performance, residency, co-working and cafe space located in Berlin-Neukölln, the "whole process" is a reference to all of their various simultaneous activities. To quote from Beuys' work directly, he explains in a statement:

> My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture, or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture *can* be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone. . .
>
> SOCIAL STRUCTURE—
> how we mould and shape
> the world in which we live:
> *Sculpture as*
> *an evolutionary process;*
> *everyone an artist.*[11]

The whole process, all the activity of shaping the art space, including the cooking of the meals in the cafe or the diversification of areas of their space for co-working, is considered a part of their social sculpture.

Like the co-founder of Agora Collective, a number of artists and curators directly reference the Beuysian influence in terms of defining their art space as a social sculpture. Discussing their collaborative projects with the Soziale Stadt program in the Soldinerkiez neighborhood of Berlin-Wedding,[12] the founder of okkRaum29 affirms that "obviously the theory of the social sculpture, the social *plastique* described by Beuys, is one of the *basics* of our community in artistic work."[13] These art spaces indicate that they define their various activities, whether it is co-working or community service, in artistic terms. The social sculpture offers an artistic reference point for the various activities they are engaged in.

Two conceptual considerations seem important when envisaging the art space as a social sculpture. First, given that they function as spaces of art production, and are often run by artists, many art spaces conceptualize the process of making the space as (part of) the art work. This highlights the congruency of place-making and art-making practices. Second, this focus on process shifts the idea of producing art

[10] OBL1. Personal Interview. 24 May 2012.

[11] Beuys (1979).

[12] Soziale Stadt is a national program implemented in Berlin by the Berlin Senate for Urban Development, with programs in specific "disadvantaged" neighborhoods like Soldinerkiez in Berlin-Wedding that support community-initiated and community-run social projects. Their calculation of "disadvantaged" is a mix of structural housing and infrastructural indicators, along with social and environmental factors.

[13] OBL16. Personal Interview. 13 August 2012.

away from the material art piece or physical space and towards a more performance-oriented and participatory art practice. This process also often involves people in the immediate vicinity, like neighbors and community projects.

The conflation of art work and art space can be evidenced in the case of "We said let there be space and therefore there was space," (我们说要有空间于是就有了空间) run by an artists' collective located in Caochangdi, an urban village outside of Beijing's 5th Ring Road.[14] Even in its name, "We said let there be space and therefore there was space," the collective harks back to the ideas of Beuys, and of conceptual art more broadly, of the origins of art in the ideation, as opposed to the material. Kosuth's work on the separation of aesthetic from art is perhaps most influential in this regard. Often regarded as a manifesto, in *Art After Philosophy* (1969), he states that "Art 'lives' through influencing other art, not by existing as the physical residue of an artist's ideas."[15] This suggests that even if the physical space no longer existed, the moment of spatial origin is in the concept through its articulation and influence, not in the physical space itself. The co-founder describes this ideational moment, which begins from the time that the art comes into being, and includes the whole exhibition process until the end, highlighting the inseparability of art space from ideas of artistic practice.[16] Inspired by Beuys' 1992 work "7000 Oaks - City Forestation Instead of City Administration" for Documenta 7 in Kassel (*7000 Eichen–Stadtverwaldung statt Stadtverwaltung*), they provide an example of this approach to their art practice when describing their art space opening. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate the breadth of the event, which serves to explain how they influence other art through their art space.

The example of this art opening points to the function of these spaces as spaces of artistic production, understood as a social process. For instance, the founders of "We said let there be space and therefore there was space" stressed several times during the interview that they viewed the space as an "original space" of art, not a "secondary space" like galleries or museums where works have been pre-produced; they want to create an art space where the space and art are co-constructed, and emerge simultaneously.[17] They pointed out the difference between their space and the neighboring Red Brick Complex designed by Ai Wei Wei, which houses several established galleries. While their space is located less than fifty meters from the galleries in the Red Brick Complex, their intention was always to be located on the street within the village; the interaction with village residents was important to them (Cf. Figures 3.3 and 3.4).[18] In other words, the conflation of the space as a source of art and the space as art becomes tied to both artistic performances and the participation of

[14] OBJ18. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012.

[15] Stiles (1996) p. 844.

[16] OBJ18. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012.

[17] "我们想做的一个艺术的原空间，这个原空间是什么概念呢？就是说在我们这个空间，和我们这个空间相比较，艺术家工作室、画廊、美术馆、艺术中心，这些空间其实是二手空间，他们才是替代空间，因为他们是把作品做好了，拿到过去做的，或者是工作室里面把一个想法在替代空间已经完成了，然后再拿出去，而我们在这就是希望艺术在这，就是事件本身就是在这发生，是这样子的，所以它叫原空间的概念."

[18] OBJ18. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012

Figure 3.1: The “We said let there be space and therefore there was space” opening in August 2012 entitled “Redism and Blueism” (红蓝主义) included a heart-shaped lit sculpture by artist Li Yifan. While the small one-room space hosted the sculpture, the event sprawled onto the street with residents and visitors mingling outside the building. As night fell, the lit-up sculpture remained visible from the street through the window and glass door. Photo source: “We said let there be space and therefore there was space” 2012 Catalogue.

Figure 3.2: Following the opening event, another collective of artists broke into the space, shattering the front window and stole the heart-shaped sculpture. They cut the sculpture into 6 pieces and sent each of the “We said let there be space and therefore there was space” members one section. The participation of local residents throughout this process, from the opening event to the involvement of the landlord, neighbors, witnesses and police, is seen as part of the art process and a description of this is included in their catalogue. During the interview, one member retrieved the part of the sculpture that was sent to him from a large manila envelope, further extending the art process. This resonates with Kosuth’s definitions of art in its influence on other art, not the “physical residue” which is in this case quite literally destroyed. Photo source: “We said let there be space and therefore there was space” 2012 Catalogue.

Figure 3.3: The Red Brick Complex located in Beijing-Caochangdi, designed by Ai Wei Wei in 2007, which includes multiple galleries and art spaces, and hosted part of Beijing Design Week in 2012, with the white “Village Mountains” installation by architect Zhang Ke from Interni Legacy visible in the distance.

a broader public.

This transgression into the performative and participatory in conceptualizing their art *qua* art space crosses the borders of art space and everyday space, extending the art space to a larger public, situated within a neighborhood. International curator and critic Hou Hanru has described that in a context of rapid privatization in Chinese cities, neighborhood-based art spaces represent “an engagement with the local community helps people to assimilate political and even metaphysical notions of resistance, and to cultivate their own ways of living and socializing.”[19] Visible in Figure 3.4 are food carts from which residents buy vegetables, reflecting the road as a predominantly pedestrian area. Towards the early evening, smoke wafts onto the street from charcoal grills on which a popular Beijing street food of skewered meat covered in spices called *chuan'r* (串儿) are grilled. Also visible in the photograph are characteristic features of the neighborhood, like the low-story structures (no higher than three or four storeys), and open electric wiring entwined at intersections in large clusters.

The focus on performance and participation also shifts the idea of the art space away from assumptions about its function as a physical space, exhibiting material objects. Seeing themselves as a facilitator of artistic collaboration and co-production,

[19]Hanru (2012).

Figure 3.4: About fifty meters from the austerity of the Red Brick Complex, this is one of the main streets of Caochangdi, where the pharmacy is located and vendors sell vegetables and fruits on push carts. On the left in grey brick is the front of “We said let there be space and therefore there was space.”

these art spaces distinguish themselves from galleries that feature the figure of the artist, with a focus on specific artistic works. Another way this is expressed was in terms of a “life sculpture” by the HomeBase Project founder in Berlin-Wedding when she described the curatorial process behind their residency program:

> The curatorial aspect of this residency is quite different, because of the structure and because of the way it works. Because it’s not only about being in your studio, working on a piece of art, or researching. It is more like a life sculpture, and the communal living is a big part of the art practice actually. It becomes one. Being here, living in your studio, working on your project, having your closest neighbors artists, living with them, working together with them, and then altogether trying somehow to make a change in the neighborhood and in the city.[20]

By treating the art space as the art work, the space diffuses the clear boundaries of the exhibition and visitor in the same way performer-spectator boundaries have blurred in the performative arts.[21] Following Beuysian ideas that “everyone is an artist,” these art spaces move away from the traditional modus operandi of cultural institutions in their function as exhibition hall. This perspective is captured by one of the cultural managers of the Platoon Kunsthalle in Berlin-Mitte when he described:

[20] OBL5. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[21] Kennedy (2009).

> We're not a venue. We're not a place where we book people for a concert. Or we book the artist to make an exhibition... Historically, because it's called Kunsthalle, not because it's the typical Kunsthalle of today, which we have in every city. Which is basically a gallery, showing high-end art. We are more closer to the original idea of the Kunsthalle, which started in 50s, with the idea of the Flux, where Nam June Paik and Beuys were smashing a piano on stage or - it's more like artists get together to also brainstorm, create something on location, through their different disciplines, with their different skills, it's not just about feature me, feature me, this egomaniac thing.[22]

This approach towards on-site co-production reflects both the non-material, performance oriented focus and the participatory nature of their artistic practice.

Another articulation of this kind of art space is Superbien! in Berlin-Prenzlauerberg who sought to create a meaningful "place," not a physical gallery: "We created a place. So this was also an idea for Superbien! Not to have a gallery, and walls to put something on."[23] Instead of a gallery, they constructed a greenhouse in a courtyard in which they invite artists to do various projects (Cf. Figure 5.4). These can be sculptural, but have also been more performance-based, or more ephemeral installations that change with the weather. Their art space has changed form several times using different material structures, has relocated in different locations within Berlin and outside of Berlin, in each manifestation as Superbien! Similarly, the co-founder of TJ in China in Beijing-Caochangdi stresses that "[It's about the] mobility of this space, not this permanence. 'Oh, what's going to happen? It's going to fall down!' [in different voice] It won't fall down. The space is [other co-founder] and me working on it. It's not the physical walls, you know?"[24] The art space is defined by their work, not the physical walls. (The mobility of TJ in China will be revisited in Chapter 6.)

Agora Collective reiterates these points when they stress the value of their art space is in the interaction and collaboration; the value of this network is both intangible and not dependent on the space:

> If this space doesn't exist anymore, there's going to be another space. There's going to be another people. And if there is not this other space, always, I mean, if there is the urge for doing something, and there is possible space for doing it, people are going to continue to doing it. And if people I met here, I know work together, this is one of the most interesting things is that we meet each other by working and it's like, all the work and personal life all connected in one. Things are developing like that. There is a lot of value in this network that is intangible and it doesn't depend on the space.[25]

[22] OBL18. Personal Interview. 6 July 2012. Paik was an artist and composer who collaborated with Beuys and other Fluxus and neo-Dada artists in several performances involving instruments on stage in the 1960s.

[23] OBL24. Personal Interview. 29 August 2012.

[24] OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.

[25] OBL1. Personal Interview. 24 May 2012.

These stated conceptual motivations have major consequences when considering some basic existential criteria for place. If Cresswell's trifecta of materiality, meaning and practice are the defining characteristics of place, then the insistent immateriality characterizing these art spaces render them incomplete places.[26] Yet if we define place from an experiential perspective, as Tuan suggested decades ago, places are created by people and sustained by "the quality of human awareness," not their tangibility.[27] Still, if these art spaces are all experience and no form, the implications for place-making become more psychological than geographical. Basic tasks of finding and maintaining a physical space may be irrelevant to their ideas of place-making. Taking these ideas about art space as a participatory process to the extreme, it would imply foregoing the art space as a unit of analysis at all. While the popularity of Beuysian ideas in both Beijing and Berlin is not the only conceptual motivation behind these art spaces, it highlights a clear commonality, and one that is significant for understandings of place.

3.2 Utopic alternatives

For many art spaces, the ideas behind their place-making go beyond process and participation, also incorporating utopic vision of what their initiators seek to achieve. The art spaces serve as a representation for the kind of world they want to live in, and as a tactic for achieving it.

One artist-curator ties the transformative role of art to its classical roots: "When it started in the Greek time, art was the combination of *ars* and *techne*, that means technic and poetry, to modify the material, which is the world."[28] She chose to locate her art space Liebig12 on Liebigstrasse in Berlin-Friedrichshain, which shares an intersection with several former squatted apartment buildings that have been converted to communal ownership since the city's reunification. The squatted housing project located at Liebigstrasse 14 was evicted in a violent conflict in 2011, mobilizing thousands from the "autonome" activist scene to try to defend it in a direct confrontation with police.[29] In fact, this was one of the reasons she decided that it would be a good location for her art space, because:

> It's very important for me to have around example of way of living that shows there is different possibilities that are all capable to sustain themselves in one way or another. So that's how I decided, oh wow, that's a very interesting place to work for me, even though it's not an area where you have a lot of galleries or ateliers.[30]

[26] Cresswell (2013).
[27] Tuan (1975) p. 165.
[28] OBL13. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.
[29] Litschko (2011).
[30] OBL13. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.

Indeed, the hunt for alternative possibilities and modes of living in the city often underpins the motivation for creating an oasis or island. In this way, the basis for creating an oasis is not purely isolation, but also critique and a means to offer an alternative space in a particular context. While the history of alternative spaces usually reflects the need for exhibition venues for art works that had a difficult time finding spaces,[31] art spaces were not only there as a pragmatic alternative, but as a reaction to the commercialism of the gallery scene.[32] One of the art space initiators described this alternative art space proliferation as having multiple drivers: the non-commercial nature of the art works themselves, that running an art space offered a more active alternative to working as an assistant at a museum, and because it offers an alternative to the "perversions" of the art market.[33]

For instance, many art spaces point out the ways in which they function outside of an economic market, contrasting themselves to art galleries and other instruments of an international art market. HomeShop contrasts itself to the well-known 798 area, established as a popular touristic destination in Beijing just outside of the 4th ring comprised of art galleries, small shops, cafes and artists' studios. Located instead within the historical boundaries of Beijing inside the 2nd ring in a *hutong* neighborhood,[34] they were faced with scrutiny when they first moved in, with neighbors coming in from time to time in confusion. One of the cofounders explained,"I think it's interesting that it does open up this conversation sometimes. Like, oh, you can have a space that's not a shop, and you can be an artist but not make paintings and sell them in 798."[35] HomeShop represents an alternative kind of space, which envisions artistic practice that is non-commercial, functioning outside of established artistic institutions and areas.

Located near HomeShop, the Institute for Provocation is in the first section of a courtyard compound (*siheyuan*) in a *hutong* closer to the commercialized Nanlougouxiang shopping street.[36] One of the coordinators added that falling outside the market logic evokes certain kinds of distrust:

> The market value, I think is much easier understood here in general. The general public understands when you are making some kind of profit with

[31] For example, Tom Marioni's Museum of Conceptual Art, which was an artist-run space that focused on works that were difficult to exhibit in conventional spaces such as installation, conceptual and performance works.

[32] Patton (1977).

[33] The interviewee described these "perversions" of the art market in terms of the symbolic value of a piece of canvas, the tax loopholes exploited within the art vendors and collectors, the lack of regulation with regards to international art fairs, and what he considered to be the morally questionable tactics used to increase the value of art. OBL23. Personal Interview. 28 April 2012.

[34] A *hutong* consists of narrow alleyways connecting courtyards of single-storey buildings. They are characteristic of old neighborhoods in Beijing located within the 2nd ring. Historically these areas were constructed as a means of delineating social classes around the imperial center of the Forbidden City during the Zhou Dynasty (1027-256 BC).

[35] OBJ10. Personal Interview. 3 August 2012.

[36] The pedestrian shopping street is a renovated *hutong* alley that hold shops, cafes, restaurants and bars. It serves as a model for inner city urban regeneration in Beijing. For a detailed account of the transformation of this area since the 2000s, see Shin (2010).

> what you do. And if not, it's really questionable and almost sneaky, like what? I think it's just–it doesn't exist.[37]

Notably, their rejection of the commercial art world is not a rejection of their embeddedness in a context, as one Institute for Provocation co-founder explained: "We don't want to be in an 'art' community, because it's an isolation and a monoculture. We would rather have a situation where you have to engage with daily life."[38] Thus, for them, the island is an island within the art world not within the neighborhood.

The Institute for Provocation hosts artists who are able to live and work in the space, similar to the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Albeit on different scales,[39] both spaces offer the artists residencies where they are able to create work that is not reliant on sales:

> When we are inviting artists, we are paying them a stipend. It means for one year, they are out of business. Not really, but they are out of the capitalist market. For one year, they are on an island. They can produce and they can follow their dreams, and it would be not necessary permanently to earn money on the market.[40]

This "island" sets these art spaces apart from galleries, for example, who are integrated as vendors in an art market. In this way, the art space serves as both an alternative to and a respite from the art market. They envision themselves as a space where artists are more free to "follow their dreams," suggesting the strictures that the art market may put on artists' practices.

Importantly, both the Institute for Provocation and Künstlerhaus Bethanien's island is an alternative specifically to the art market, not a general alternative to the everyday marketplace like Liebig12 or HomeShop. Run as a limited liability company (GmbH) with corporate sponsors supporting their programs, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien is outspoken and clear about this distinction, "We hold fast to our insight that so-called market-economy schemes backing supposedly 'non-profitable utopias' are not only wrong, but simply lack culture."[41] In considering alternatives, there are multiple forms of escape that these art spaces seek to provide.

Another notion of "island" is provided by Künstlerhaus Bethanien's former neighbor, the Kunstraum Bethanien. Separated by a somewhat complex history, the Kunstraum Bethanien in Berlin-Kreuzberg (Figures 3.5 and 3.6) provides an island in the context of an escape from the context of urban change. Still located in the Bethanien building, Kunstraum Bethanien has a relationship with the wider community that spans decades of cooperation in terms of their location, programming and the funding they receive from the local district administration (Bezirksamt Kreuzberg). Yet the

[37] ABJ12. Personal Interview.10 December 2012.
[38] Feola (2014).
[39] The Institute for Provocation hosts one artist at a time, whereas the Künstlerhaus Bethanien usually hosts about 30 resident artists at a time.
[40] OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
[41] Tannert (2007) p. 7.

director insists that, “I hope we still will be, and we are already, an island in a changing city. It’s like a psycho-geographical role we have.”[42] The “psycho-geographical” role he envisions recalls the ideas of the Situationist International, an art movement that emphasized the effect of the geographical environment on the individual.[43] It references the idea of “unitary urbanism” that the Situationists envisioned as “the ensemble of arts and technics as means contributing to an integral composition of the milieu.”[44]

Moreover, the concepts developed by the Situationists, like psychogeography, were designed to “subvert and explore revolutionary possibilities within the urban scene.”[45] Thus, the Situationist reference was specifically a means to situate the art space as an intervention within the greater urban space. It is not only a passive island, but in its conceptualization of an alternative, it also offers a critique of ongoing processes in the urban context. This seems to be especially relevant for cities like Berlin and Beijing undergoing such dramatic structural change. Rather than serving as a driver of urban change, the perspective provided by the Kunstraum Bethanien situates the art space outside of urban development–either as an alternative to the market or a refuge from urban transformation.

The reference to the Situationist International was also made in relation to Ausland, an art space in Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg known for its experimental music and performance events. One of the organizing team members recalled an exhibition at the Berlin art space NGBK comparing Ausland to the Situationists. He explained that this was after the nearby building where they were previously located was “the winner of the highest trash hill three times in a row,” the result of a competition organized by squats in Berlin.[46] He detailed that their garbage pile usually reached the first floor and that it was a “really fun and exhausting” time where people would come by to play their public grand piano, and “really strange” sounds emanated all through the night.[47] In recalling these times, when they were the “art fraction of the squatter movement,” and contrasting them to current activism behind saving art spaces, a certain kind of nostalgia creeps in. Despite these ideas of psycho-geographical islands or the desire to seek out alternative possibilities, which demarcate the art space from their contexts of urban transformation, nostalgic reflection tends to entrench the art space in their location.

[42] OBL11. Personal Interview. 28 August 2012.
[43] Debord (1955); Knabb (1981); Bonnett (1992).
[44] Knabb (1981) p. 17.
[45] Bonnett (1992) p. 76.
[46] OBL3. Personal Interview. 22 August 2012.
[47] OBL3. Personal Interview. 22 August 2012.

Figure 3.5: The main entrance of the Bethanien in which the Kunstraum Bethanien is located. It also served as the location for the Künstlerhaus Bethanien from 1973-2010. The building was formerly a hospital, which closed in 1970. The activism to protect the building from demolition included the involvement of squatters, citizens' initiatives and preservationists.

Figure 3.6: The hallway walking to the Kunstraum Bethanien inside the building it shares with a number of other artistic, cultural, community and socially-oriented groups.

3.3 Nostalgic localisms

The role of location and the "local" behind the conceptual motivations of many art spaces surfaces in their demarcation of city from neighborhood. While art spaces may serve as an oasis in a changing city (Kunstraum Bethanien), they also insist on a connection to their neighborhood ("We said let there be space and therefore there was space"). While the city may represent a juggernaut of development sprinting towards some future from which one needs respite, the neighborhood has a history with local residents to be preserved and lionized. The fascination with history and an attendant nostalgia is a further demarcation of the local–tied to particularities in buildings and historical figures rather than preoccupations with socialist pasts or industrialization periods.[48]

For the art space Kurt Kurt, located in the building where the writer Kurt Tucholsky was born in Berlin-Moabit, the location's history played an important role in the opening their art space (Cf. Figure 3.7).[49] The co-founders explained that they had often organized art in public spaces, but needed a really special reason to open an art space, "either a special place or a special situation with a history, something so

[48] In this way, it is distinctive from the analysis of nostalgia as a fascination with a "mythical past of tranquility" (Miles 1997: 106), but rather a fascination with a past rife with complex stories and interesting figures.

[49] OBL10. Personal Interview. 12 August 2012.

Figure 3.7: The commemorative plaque reads “Birthplace of the writer Kurt Tucholsky" (*Geburtshaus des Schriftstellers Kurt Tucholsky*. It stands just adjacent to the front window of the Kurt Kurt art space in Berlin-Moabit.

that we have the feeling, yes, here it makes sense.”[50] They considered Tucholsky a “hero” of literature, seeing him as an artist who could be politically and socially critical, but also constructive in terms of producing works. So when they accidentally came across the historical plaque commemorating the building as his birthplace, it provided them the “concrete reason” they were seeking. The history of Tucholsky did not only help determine a location, it was a motivating factor behind opening a space at all. Clearly, the name “Kurt Kurt” is an homage to this inspiration, and it serves as a reminder that the role of history is not only a descriptive attribute for these spaces, but can also serve as an existential factor–the very reason they may have come into being.

Historical figures are a motivating factor, even a source of creating a locational identity, for many artists considering opening a space. Louisa Grimm was a painter who lived and worked in Berlin-Kreuzberg for twenty years; when she passed away, she left her work to the building owner who then felt an obligation to turn her studio into a museum. Even though the current art space does not exhibit her painting anymore, they retained a part of the name “Grimmuseum" because, as the curator

[50] *“Entweder ein ganz besonderen Ort, oder eine besondere Situation mit eine Geschichte oder irgendsowas damit wir das Gefühl haben, ja, hier ist das Sinnful.”*

explains, “it was important to keep the history alive.”[51] Although he came to Berlin to focus on his own art work, he saw the empty museum space when he happened to be looking for a flat in the building. There was no premeditation in searching out a suitable building for an art space, he explains, "it was just overnight. you saw the space, you fall in love, you say OK, that’s it, let’s go for it.”[52] Something about the look and feel of the space, especially when tied to a captivating history, facilitated the process for some founders who were otherwise just passing through.

Both Kurt Kurt and Grimmuseum keep these histories alive through referencing the past in their names, but other art spaces also integrate the past in their various practices. HomeBase Project is an art space and residency program located in a former brewery in Berlin-Pankow, and maintains a large photograph of the former brewery workers in their main common room (Cf. Figure 5.7). Part of being a site-specific residency for them meant, according to their residency curator, “reacting also to what exactly this place is, and where it is in the history behind it. Which is somehow also a part of the residency. The fact that it was a brewery, and we’ve been brewing beer.”[53] For its founder, inhabiting a building with history is a means to “reveal. . . the history of the site while creating a new chapter, a new artistic interpretation.”[54] Art itself can, according to her, “resurface an image or a narrative,” suggesting a kind of palimpsest embedded in these sites.[55]

The resurfacing of history was one aspect the Za Jia Lab (杂家) considered when it decided to preserve the white tiles behind their bar. Located near the Drum Tower (鼓楼) and Bell Tower (钟楼) in Beijing within the second ring, Za Jia Lab is housed in a former taoist temple that is about 500 years old (Cf. Figures 3.9, 3.10, 3.11). Surrounding the towers remains a *hutong*-based area, though many buildings have been renovated following cultural preservation policies in the early 2000s protecting *hutong* areas. This often implies demolition and reconstruction following certain motifs. When the founders came across the temple in 2010, it was being used as a *Majong* room and tofu shop, and covered in plastic and tile. The co-founder joked that when they moved in, “it was like a kind of stinky white cute” since the previous tenant was a tofu shop who had insulated the walls in white tiles.[56] When Za Jia Lab moved in, they tore down most of the tile, which revealed ancient wooden beams in the skeleton of the ceiling. In the end, they decided to keep one wall of white tiles in memory of the tofu shop (Cf. Figure 3.11).[57] This selective preservation recalls literature about how material surfaces hold memory.[58]

This experience resonates with an artist who participated in the Dashila(b) space

[51] OBL4. Personal Interview. 9 August 2012.
[52] OBL4. Personal Interview. 9 August 2012.
[53] OBL5. Personal Interview. 21 June 2012.
[54] OBL6. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[55] OBL6. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[56] OBJ21. Personal Interview. 15 November 2012.
[57] OBJ21. Personal Interview. 15 November 2012.
[58] Samuel (1996).

curated as part of Beijing Design Week. Located in the *hutong* neighborhood of Dashilar south of the Forbidden City, the materiality of the space (See Figure 3.8) influenced her art in concrete ways:

> Dashila(b) preferred to maintain the character of the room which didn't allow for the walls to be spackled and painted. Can you imagine the kind of history this room held, all the stories it contained from such a transformative time? I was told that this factory space used to be an old electricity factory. . . This character included a large green stripe painted around the bottom periphery of the room, chipped old paint and any elements caused by wear and tear. This included random holes in the walls. There were also multiple electrical outlets and pipes placed on the long walls of the room. And there were also bright, red fire extinguishers, a mandatory presence for safety reasons. Because the space has a lot of character and can serve as a historical installation piece on it's own, it was important to allow for both the project and context to resonate in a complimentary way. It was important to make sure that the project had a voice and did not fight with the space. Hence, the project was executed in black and white.[59]

Furthermore, the co-founder of Za Jia Lab explains that invited artists from Europe really appreciate the aesthetics of this ancient temple because, "It's the way they're imagining China, maybe. It's very romantic in a way. It's different from the white cubes."[60] Certain forms of nostalgia for certain aesthetics reflect an "imagined geography"[61] about the places they have arrived in. The romantic imagination attributed here to Europeans evokes post-colonial criticisms of orientalism specifically associated with the "Western" gaze underlying colonial structures of power,[62] and suggests a nostalgia for something that was never lost: "nostalgia without memory."[63] Like the notion of the art space as a retreat from the art market from the above discussion, Za Jia Lab retreats from the traditional gallery aesthetic of the "white cube." In doing so, they inhabit a temple that serves romantic imaginations in which certain forms of orientalist nostalgia are established as an alternative art space.

Similar to HomeBase Project, Za Jia Lab also seeks to reuse the space by bringing in something new. While they selectively preserve and reveal the parts of those buildings that are most interesting or romantic for them, they also seek to draw inspiration and repurpose the spaces for something of their own. They serve as rich sites of exploration for the extensive work on memory and space, which highlights the complex negotiation and politics of memory.[64] They also exemplify, albeit on a small scale, the urban regeneration process of re-purposing space as an instrument for

[59] ABJ7. Personal Interview. 10 October 2012.
[60] OBJ21. Personal Interview. 15 November 2012.
[61] Gregory (1994).
[62] Said (1978); Mohanty (1991); Said (1993).
[63] Appadurai (1996) p. 30.
[64] Dear (1997); Huyssen (2003); Edensor (2005).

Figure 3.8: The building that Dashila(b) selected served as a site for a commissioned work by the artist CYJO who conducted a local ethnography in Dashilar. In her diptych, she presented a portrait still and a video of interviews with residents and local business owners. Her piece *Moment, Moving Moment*, presents layers of local history, in the materiality of the walls, preserved from its days as a factory, and in the narratives told through the video. These narratives focused on the changing neighborhood and the relationship to tradition. This was made perhaps most evident in the portrait of the animal trainer, whose profession (*shouyi*) was closely connected to the proximity to the imperial palace, which the Dashilar neighborhood is adjacent to. For thousands of years, the animal trainers for the imperial palace resided, trained and passed on their craft in Dashilar. The art work thus integrated the art space in its physical materiality, with the urban space and its local history.

Figure 3.9: The entrance of Za Jia Lab from the street involves a set of stairs. Through the entryway into the first courtyard, there is a regular vegetable market.

Figure 3.10: Divided into two rooms by the entryway, this room serves as Za Jia Lab's performance and exhibition space. The ancient wooden beams have likely been replaced since the building was originally built 500 years ago.

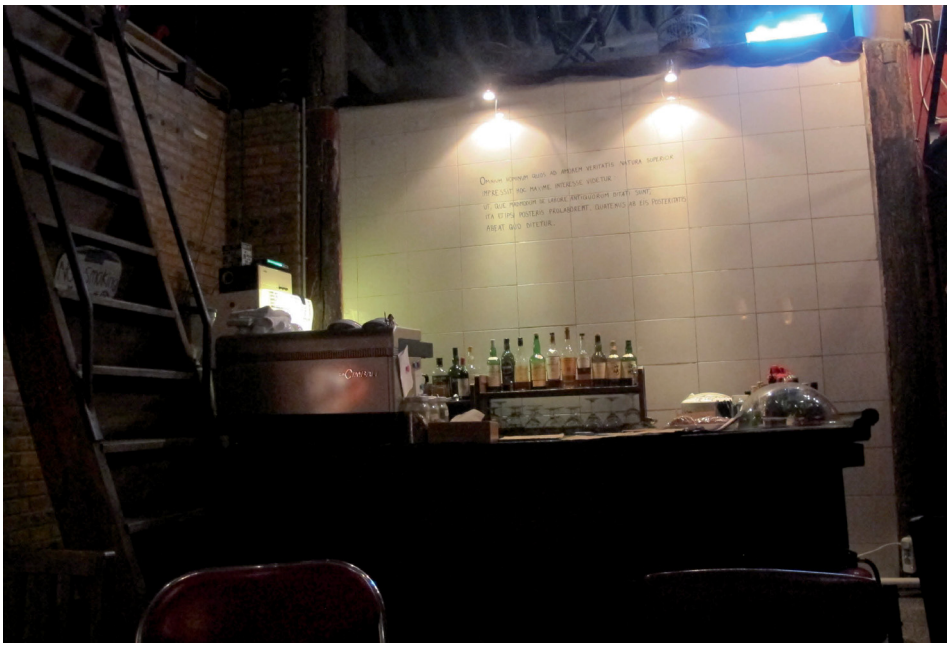

Figure 3.11: White tiles offer a backdrop to the Za Jia Lab bar, a memorial to the "stinky white cube" tofu shop of the building's previous tenant.

different interest groups.[65] Yet these projects are not part of an urban regeneration policy. They define their nostalgia in terms of their site-specificity. Their fascination with the specific histories of the buildings they inhabit serve as cornerstone of the kind of place they seek to be.

Their reliance on the buildings' histories for inspiration, however, also points to a certain kind of passivity. It may be a reflection of the sense that nostalgia functions as a means of escapism, and as a reflection of historical loss, absence of moral certainty, loss of autonomy and social relationships, and loss of a sense of personal authenticity or emotional spontaneity.[66] It certainly suggests an alternative from the programmatic ideas of creating an idealized utopia. Rather than imposing programmatic ideas onto a space, or searching out spaces that uniquely suit a particular purpose, these initiators stress the serendipity in their discovery of these spaces. Indeed, in stressing the influence of pre-given contexts, locations and buildings, the initiators of these spaces create a distance from the consequences of their activities. This leads to the question of the extent to which conceptual motivations really defines the kind of places these art spaces seek to become.

[65] Miles (2005); Miles/Paddison (2005); Barnes et al. (2006); Bresnihan/Byrne (2014).
[66] Davis (1979); Turner (1987).

3.4 Apathetic passengers –a counterpoint?

In contrast to the aforementioned examples of art spaces that are engaged with the neighborhood, location or historical context, there is also a strain of apathy or disengagement that importantly underlies many practices. In contradistinction to the kind of ideological underpinnings of some art spaces, there is also (an often simultaneous) thread of self-conscious apathy with regards to the greater urban context in which art spaces are located. Whereas conceptual motivations are characterized by various modes of engagement, the relationship to the city is marked by a certain distance and dissociation. This seemingly contradictory tendency is seen in two ways: first, with regards to political engagement on urban or cultural policy issues, and secondly, as described by their lack of local knowledge.

In contrast to their ideological, theoretical and intellectual engagement with regards to describing their art spaces, a sense of apathy sometimes arises when discussing their involvement as stakeholders in a broader political debate about the rent control or cultural funding in the city. Some art space initiators are actively engaged in advocacy work that involves building coalitions or alliances to leverage power and influence on institutional structures. For instance, the Koalition der Freien Szene (Coalition for the Free Scene) seeks to advocate for various art and project spaces, who they view as the main attraction for tourists to Berlin, to get more recognition from the Berlin Senate in the form of public funding. The director of the coalition, who had previously helped to initiate and program an art space, in discussing political engagement explains:

> I think this is a double-sided thing. Of course, if you can't vote, you have a feeling that politically you can't do anything. . . But then on the other hand, since you are not from here and you don't think 'this is *my* city,' you don't feel so pushed to do something about your city, because you're just here as a passenger.[67]

His description of these artists as passengers reflects the perception that they are only temporarily there, perhaps only to take advantage of a particular moment. It also reflects the lack of ownership some of these passengers might feel about the city where their art space is located.

The lack of local knowledge is often a critical reflection of their inadequate language skills and lack of local knowledge, sometimes revealed through their desire or feeling of obligation to learn more about their context. Their mobility sometimes implies that some of the art space initiators face challenges with regards to the language and cultural or political barriers that make engagement more challenging. Sometimes it's a factor of the time that is required to familiarize themselves with the system. For instance, the manager and curator of HomeBase Project indicated that they had intentions of learning more about the context in which they were working:

[67] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.

> But what I want to add actually to this. I didn't invest a lot of time *yet* to look more at the social system how Germany works, or Berlin. I know a lot from how the Netherlands works and it was really for me because I make quite late, or after half a year the decision to really stay here, I never invested all the time I already did in the Netherlands here. So it's really something where I'd like to invest more time in. (Curator: Yeah, so am I.) These discussions really take time to figure out what's going on.[68]

It takes time not only to learn about the context, but also overcome basic language barriers. Sometimes, art spaces find that these barriers are important to recognize and are not always meant to be overcome. One of the motivations behind starting the Blackbridge Art Space in Caochangdi was to bridge the gap between Chinese and international artists in Beijing. While the founder seeks to actively improve her Chinese, "It's hard to learn Chinese, and I feel like an illiterate most of the time," she also points out the need to recognize her own distance from the local context:

> I don't think as an artist– for my own production, it's a great working surrounding, but I don't feel like in my art practice, I don't feel connected to Beijing. For all the Chinese artists I know here, I know it's so exciting a time, and they have so much to do, and so much to make up, to come across, and I don't have that at all. I disagree with foreign artists who come here and then start meddling with China in their art work. Because I don't think that's the most reasonable thing to do. Because even after three years, I can't say I know what's happening here. I'm still in the dark most of the time. So I use it to analyze where I'm from from a distance, but I can't comment on Beijing or on China, I don't think. It's too much for me.[69]

While she was talking about the presumptuous nature of artists commenting on Beijing or China in their artistic practice, it also reflects a general distancing for her. This points to a sentiment of lacking enough knowledge to really engage with the local context. While this offers her rather a means to "analyze where I'm from from a distance," it drives her work in terms of building bridges but not engaging with nostalgic pasts, or offering ideological futures as determined by social sculpture of Situationists alternatives.

For the co-founder of TJ in China, a similar distancing to the local context occurred. While seeking to transplant their "art practice on the border to Beijing," TJ in China also doesn't feel a sense of ownership over their space. In discussing the Caochangdi village where they are located, the co-founder described the sentiment as such: "If someone tells that they demolish Caochangdi, I say, OK, we leave. I'm not going to stay. 'Oh, this is my land!' Because it's not."[70] They do not feel a sense of entitlement to or ownership of the area where they are located, and define themselves

[68] OBL5. Personal Interview. 21 June 2012.
[69] OBJ3. Personal Interview. 25 October 2012.
[70] OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.

Figure 3.12: The entrance to the courtyard that TJ in China shares with a few other art spaces in Beijing-Caochangdi.

as distinctly from elsewhere, even conceptualizing their art space as a representation of a border space. Indeed, the border as metaphor is useful in understanding these distancing stances,[71] especially as it outlines some of their non-place characteristics, "a person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver."[72] Yet these actors are not simply entering a "space of non-place," but making a place.

Indeed, while a lack of language skills or cultural barriers may prevent them from feelings of ownership, or function as a source of alienation from the local contexts, it is importantly *not* a barrier towards making these art spaces. In discussing the space Mica Moca in Berlin, the co-founder of the space described his experience:

> I really didn't know the city. And the city I was before was in Brussels. So, I didn't know this city, absolutely not. I didn't know anybody in here. And just by doing something, just by pushing something. Of course we got lucky and of course I think, if I would be, I don't know, South African or if I would be from Kenya, or if I would be from the States and I wouldn't be able to speak German, it would have been more difficult. Of course. To

[71] Lugo (1997) p. 60-61.
[72] Auge (1995) p. 103.

> speak to the mayor and to get access to this thing. But this is a language barrier. In general, I think you can do things here. . . if you want to look at the space, for example, Agora Collective in Neukölln, it's run by people from Brazil. They don't care about their language barrier or nationality, or something like that. They just do something and it's a wonderful place. So, I think it really is an excuse for laziness or "ehh- I don't want to do that." But I think there is no city in the world who screams more "Do something with me, work on me, leave your print in Berlin and mark the city and change the city and consider it as *your* city." I think this is a wonderful thing.[73]

Following this experience, a lack of engagement in the form of political activism on issues that directly affect art spaces such as rent, cultural funding and land rights should not be confused with a general sense of apathy. In fact, this quote suggests that many of these art spaces are started in the face of structural obstacles. In the interview, the co-founder of Mica Moca further questioned his own ignorance upon entering Berlin:

> We didn't even know if Berlin even needed another factory. And we felt a little bit awkward, because it's pretentious not to be from the city and say, look we have 6,000 square meters, and we'll run an old factory. Where every Berliner would say, oh my God, again such bullshit, Berlin doesn't need a new space, it needs money. This is what we heard before. And we said, fuck it, we'll do it, and even if we just do a barbecue there, that's a cool thing to do. And then it exploded as I said. As I said before, we [had] 350 shows, we had 2000 artists.[74]

Thus, some of the disengagement with issues or local structures could be interpreted as being a result of not having enough time to learn about where they should effectively engage, or of feeling inadequately informed and not wanting to be presumptuous in their claims, or in the active sense of rejecting barriers to entry, and doing so in spite of other precedents or experiences. If the latter, as in the case of Mica Moca, then they are perhaps simply more brazen in taking on risks.

The motivations for these spaces, whether they are ideologically framed in terms of molding a social sculpture, facilitating small utopic alternatives, engaging with history, or doing "a cool thing," are at times tempered and at times helped by these artists' coming from elsewhere and having only been in Berlin or Beijing for a limited time. In their explanations about why these spaces came into being, the activities are framed in artistic terms, their impact seen as a social critique, their nostalgia and apathy as different reflections of their feeling of distance from the place where they are. They are insistent on being defined by mobility–the spread of artistic ideas, the migratory effects of being an outsider. Seeing location as belonging to someone else,

[73] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.
[74] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.

while claiming their art spaces for their own oasis or utopia, how do they deal with structural banalities?

Building on Bonnett, it is in the art spaces' reconciliation of artistic conceptual meanings with everyday experience that forms of artistic ideology emerge.[75] To better understand this reconciliation, the banalities of everyday life need to be better understood. The following chapter explores on the practices of making art spaces, through which their interaction with local structures transcends the view of artists as either passengers or risk takers. It elevates the relevance of local economic, social and political structural contexts of which there will be more in the following chapter. Already this chapter has presented tensions between the ideological, artistic motivations underlying these art spaces and the structural issues that they must respond to. For instance, envisioning these art spaces as psycho-geographic islands was described as a reaction to the perception of an encroaching neoliberal urban landscape. While they may offer a critique of the art market, of seek to create a romantic island, they must also play along.

Though the existence of a physical space is not always a prerequisite for the existence of the art space, these art spaces inhabit physical locations. Citing De Certeau, there are "innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game, that is, the space instituted by others, characterize the subtle, stubborn, resistance activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations."[76] Indeed, playing along and dealing with the banalities of everyday life are far from neutral or passive activities.

[75] Bonnett (1992).
[76] DeCerteau (1984) p. 18.

Chapter 4

Practices – Competitive Urban Arenas

Regardless of the artistic motivations and stated engagements, the practices of initiating and sustaining these art spaces reveal the degree to which place-making is characterized by practically-oriented, at times opportunistic motivations, more than artistic goals. While the stated art space concepts may transcend the physical confines of a rented room, struggling with everyday banalities like rent reveal the ways that their activities are determined and shaped by basic politico-economic structures and norms. So while the art spaces may conceive of themselves as islands, they are also situated within a legal context and rental market. Indeed, this exposes the complex relationships that obfuscate the possibility of direct causal relationships between artistic intention and place-making practices.

The place-making practices behind art spaces help to substantiate the claim that creativity has indeed been elevated to an "imperative," empowering new actors in the realm of interurban competition.[1] In the analysis of the place-making, power is understood as an enactment, as a representation of an "assemblage of political power that is defined by its practices, not by some predetermined scalar arrangement of power."[2] Analyzing place-making in these terms requires accounting for the conditions that give rise to this empowerment. The ubiquity of the creativity discourse entangled with both uncertainty and positional awareness creates an *enabling condition* for art spaces; it increases the value of creative capital in which artists are able to trade and establishes a need for them to do so. In other words, identifying their projects as an art space means something for their monthly rent. Their place-making practices powerfully show how creative capital is exchanged for financial and political capital in dealing with banal realities like negotiating contracts.

Through the qualitative lens, however, it is evident that there is a much broader

[1] Peck (2005).
[2] Allen/Cochrane (2007) p. 1171.

range of possibilities, resources and strategies that don't align with this creative capital approach. This range of activities curtails the centrality of creative capital, defined by its exchange value, towards a variegated resource perspective, based on activities like commercial diversification and financial transfer. These empirical examples illustrate how these art spaces can remain non-profit while sustaining costs of operation. Indeed, it is the banal activities that constitute conscious moments of transforming spaces into places, which "involves the assertion of socially (often ritually) organized power over places and settings."[3] These practices reflect a kind of place-making activity that indicates both a surplus of resources, financial and temporal, and the resourcefulness of individual actors in their ability to access, generate and employ these resources in the making of art spaces.

These practices encapsulate a wide range of activities leveraging creative capital and resources for art spaces, taking advantage of the assumptions established by the creativity imperative, and bartering with the market to trade some teaching for some free time. In order to create their social sculptures and psycho-geographical islands, these art spaces have carved out a narrow, but empowered realm of possibility.

4.1 Enabling condition–precarious anxieties and creative capital

The enabling condition establishes the the context in which art spaces are possible and delineates the scope of their place-making practices. The condition is comprised of two components. First, they operate with a perception of precariousness linked with the inevitability of neoliberal developmental patterns in the competitive urban arena–driving a sense of need. For example, many operate under the assumption that a more financially affluent renter could displace them at any time, and eventually will. Second, they understand the broad assumptions about creativity as a value, especially in conjunction with human capital as "foreign" creatives. Put simply, they understand how various actors like landlords or municipality administrators view their worth. This enabling condition elevates the value of the creative capital that artists exchange for financial and political capital in their place-making practice. It was through interpreting the empirical findings about their place-making practices that the elements of these conditions were made distinguishable.

The first component of the enabling condition establishes the general anxiety about spatial security, and the feeling artists have that they are under constant threat of losing their art space to more financially lucrative arrangements. This reflects both contextual differences and similarities with regards to property rights and land use in Berlin and Beijing. For instance, while forms of real estate ownership are highly

[3] DeCerteau (1984) p. 184.

varied in Berlin, ownership in Beijing is characterized by limited time contracts and the ultimate control of the local government.[4] As a result, contracts for art spaces in Beijing are often non-existent or subject to changing rules, often attached to specific municipal-level actors. The aggressive rent-maximizing behavior of these actors is due to a number of reasons, the primary being that land use in urban China is a key source of revenue for local governments.[5] Tax reforms in the 1990s decentralized responsibility while simultaneously recentralizing tax revenue collection and eliminating many other sources of tax revenues available to local governments.[6] Local governments are therefore charged with wanting to convert land use regardless of "legal procedures and their responsibility for people's livelihood."[7] This impetus towards increasing land use revenues regardless of legality is even more prescient in peripheral areas.[8] These characterizations certainly apply to Caochangdi, where the art space Nali Nali (Where Where) is located.

The co-founder of Nali Nali interprets this threat in terms of their uncertain and complicated relationship to their landlord. The co-founder describes this perception:

> China's a place where relationships between the landlord and the tenant are almost feudal. It's a system that continues with longstanding power dynamic where there's very few–there's very little recourse for a tenant in terms of receiving proper services, or compensations or challenging things. It's a very interesting thing to look at–how that dynamic, the lack of autonomy, the lack of control that the artists have over the spaces where they work affects the development and changes for the art community. Because *many* art districts have been torn down for new developments, condominiums, and stuff, because they serve the financial interests of the landlords, even though they break long-term agreements and leases in doing so... And it gives many of the art communities and spaces a tentative feel.[9]

This consideration that the feeling of no control has affected the art community will prove relevant for the more specific practices of the art spaces themselves. The perception, based on precedent, that they will inevitably be displaced establishes a significant part of the background for the place-making activities in both Beijing and Berlin. Indeed, in both cities, artists expressed the feeling that they are in perpetual competition with more financially powerful actors that threaten to displace them. Though art spaces may benefit from legally enforceable contracts in Berlin, they are often subject to very short termination clauses. Thus, although the experience of precariousness is subject to structural differences (the legal system, property and land rights), the enabling condition is similar in both cities.

[4] For a more differentiated analysis of local governance structures in urban China see Ren and Sun (2011).
[5] Wu/Xu/Yeh (2007); Shin (2009); Hsing (2010); Wu (2011).
[6] Liu/Lin (2014) p. 119.
[7] Liu/Lin (2014) p. 7.
[8] Ren/Sun (2012).
[9] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.

Figure 4.1: The view of the entrance to Nali Nali in Caochangdi. It is located in a shared courtyard with a major gallery, that is also their landlord.

Although the art spaces in Berlin benefit from the security of contract-based relationships with their landlords, these contracts often hold clauses allowing the owners to ask the art spaces to vacate on short notice. This again reinforces the feeling that the art spaces are in competition with more financially powerful renters, who could displace them at any time. Several art spaces in Kolonie Wedding, a cluster of small storefront art spaces in Berlin's Wedding district, have these kinds of clauses in their contracts. Their landlord, DeGeWo, is a real estate corporation that is the largest residential property holder in Berlin.[10] The art spaces in Kolonie Wedding are the ground floor tenants of DeGeWo apartment buildings, which may otherwise be used for commercial purposes (Cf. Figure 4.2). As the founder of the art space OKK Raum29 commented on their relationship:

> Well, the contract economically for us is very good, because of the low prices of rent costs. But on the other hand, obviously, we have a clause in this contract, if there's somebody coming in or looking for the room and they can pay the *full* rent, the economic rent, which is more than twice the price we are paying now, a little bit more than twice, if there is coming somebody like this–this DeGeWo, this consortium has the possibility to get you out in very short time. So, I'm not sure, but I think our minimum time to be out is within the month. So, two or three weeks before, you get notice that it's over.[11]

In other words, the art space is able to rent the space for below market price because of the lack of interest in the property.[12] But the artists are aware that demand for the space could change at any time. These examples of landlord-tenant relationships reflect the predominance of financial interests on the part of the landlords in both Beijing and Berlin, and that the precarious position the art spaces inhabit. Art spaces seem, in both cases, to function for property holders as a means towards attracting a more financially lucrative renter. Indeed, this reasoning is behind the model of *Zwischennutzung* (literally "in-between use"), especially well-established in Berlin through various agencies and the Berlin Senate itself.[13] It is often seen as the confluence of multiple interests - of property owners, interim users and urban development more broadly.[14] Even if this is not always the explicit intention, it is the perception and in some cases the experience of the artists that there exists a threat in keeping their spaces. Regardless of whether these spaces are conceptualized as an interim placeholder or not, they *de facto* often function as such. Asides from the rare cases of ownership, limited time rental contracts establishe the need to gain leverage in the

[10] DeGeWo, short for for *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaues*, is a limited liability real estate corporation (*Aktiengesellschaft*) founded in 1924.

[11] OBL16. Personal Interview. 13 August 2012.

[12] Notably DeGeWo's calculation of their investment in the Kolonie Wedding project is based on a broader inclusion of the environmental improvement of the areas where their properties are located. Having active tenants is seen as means to improve the neighborhood more generally, eventually helping the property value indirectly. Bielka/Schwerk (2011) p. 165.

[13] Colomb provides a history of *Zwischennutzung* in Berlin (2012a).

[14] Ziehl et al. (2012); SenStadt (2007); Krauzick (2007).

Figure 4.2: The street view of the OKK Raum29 entrance shows neighboring businesses such as the “Orient Shop” selling hookahs next door and a bakery on the corner. Various small businesses serve as the ground floor tenants of DeGeWo-owned buildings in Berlin-Wedding that mostly serve the needs of area residents such as hairdressers, vegetable vendors, etc.

relationships with their landlords.

Working in tandem with these anxieties about keeping their space is an awareness about the position of art spaces vis-à-vis the creativity discourse. This is embedded in a broader vision of the inevitability of a developing neoliberal city with certain tendencies regarding the commodification of creativity. Therefore, alongside the creativity imperative, the development imperative that instrumentalizes art in its wake is often viewed as an inevitability. For instance, the curator of Telescope in Beijing drew on his experience living in New York in the 1980s to explain this process of change which is “happening anyway” in Beijing:

> I have anxiety when they tear down a hutong. I have anxiety when I see more Starbucks and McDonalds than I see Chinese *baozi*[15] restaurants or something. That’s anxiety. But that’s no different than the US. Look at Chelsea, look at East Village and SoHo. One day there’s an artists’

[15]Baozi (包子) are a steamed filled bun, often eaten at breakfast or as a snack. The types of places serving baozi are more often a kind of Chinese fast food establishment rather than fine dining.

> studio, the next day there's a gallery, the next day there's a Prada. Unfortunately, artists are really the target now, the real estate target. At least in New York, they realize they can follow the artists, but clean things up. Then they move in, with their–raise the rents, and everyone has to go find another space. So that's happening anyway. And that's kind of what–well, that's what happened in 798.[16]

Making explicit this awareness about the instrumentalization of creativity, and sometimes distancing or rejecting the premises forthright, is a necessary prerequisite towards understanding artists' appropriations of these ideas as potentially subversive. Beyond the implicit awareness suggested by their analysis of urban change, awareness of their creativity as valuable is often explicitly acknowledged.

For instance, one of the cultural managers of the Platoon Kunsthalle in Berlin describes their longevity as a function of their awareness of the urban landscape, and the artists' assumed roles within it:

> If you give space to creatives, they make something amazing out of it, it's just that if they're instrumentalized just because of profit motivations from real estate people or even the city itself, then you can get lost. *But* Berlin is different because people are aware of it, and also the creatives are aware that even though they are against these processes, they are the ones that make it happen, you know.[17]

To summarize, the actors behind these art spaces are aware that creativity signifies profit to "real estate people." Although they may not seek to participate in increasing property value, they know there exists an assumption by property owners that art spaces do increase the real estate value of an area. This knowledge sometimes results in strategic manoeuvres, as will be discussed later in this chapter, and sometimes in a general kind of skepticism with regards to the role of creativity as an urban imaging or tourism strategy. This skepticism is described by the founder of the Month of Performance Art in Berlin, which takes place in multiple art spaces in Berlin: "It's like, Berlin making itself beautiful with this very fertile creative ground. . . but at the same time, what I like about Berlin as well is there's a lot of skepticism in this."[18] There is an awareness and critical view of the instrumentalization of creativity for urban development.

In constructing a new art park on the outskirts of Beijing, the director of the Inside Out Museum (Cf. Figure 4.3) reflects on the rather differentiated perspectives about the artists' role in real estate development. In his interpretation of the processes of valorization of real estate in other Beijing areas like 798 and Caochangdi, he notes the threatening perspective of the municipal government who owns the properties, "From the artists' point of view, we see it as the land is valuable now because of our effort. Because we are here. They view it from a different point of view. They see, this

[16] OBJ15. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
[17] OBL18. Personal Interview. 6 July 2012.
[18] CBL8. Personal Interview. 13 July 2012.

Figure 4.3: Located at the foothills of the mountains surrounding Beijing, the site of the Inside Out Museum includes a number of simultaneous constructions including theaters, studios and a McDonald's, visible in this picture at the horizon where the buildings meet the mountain line. The private investor is simultaneously interested in real estate development and art, citing the trajectory of the property development in 798 as a model.

place is now worth a lot of money and you can't pay me that much money."[19] In some cases the "effort" includes a material component of renovation, and is not only tied to the symbolic value that the artists' presence may have.[20] In asking to reflect on the role of artists in valorization of property, the curator of Telescope in Beijing describes from his New York experience that "the place I moved, there was nobody. There was just broken down buildings. The street had drug users, prostitutes, cars with their johns. . . We moved in there, we renovated, built it, developed it. And I thought about that. But I never did it for commercial purposes. I did it just for survival."[21]

All of this places art spaces squarely in a paradoxical situation in terms of their role instigating the processes of their own displacement.[22] Regardless of their in-

[19] OBJ11. Personal Interview. 14 November 2012.

[20] See Harvey on the valorization of urban space by art through various forms of symbolism (1973) as well as his application of the labor theory of value to urban space (2012).

[21] OBJ15. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.

[22] These processes of artist-led displacement in cities are well documented - Zukin (1982); Ley (2003); Zukin/Braslow (2011); Ren/Sun (2012) - and are sometimes framed in terms of gentrification processes

Figure 4.4: A performance inside one of the rooms of Mica Moca in Berlin. Photo source: Mica Moca 2011 www.micamoca.com.

tentions to commercialize property, the valorization of these locations is often tied directly to the displacement of the art space, validating claims that "artists are also the victims of the same process because they can no longer afford to live there."[23] Even if the consequence may not ultimately benefit the artists, this perspective points to a broadly held perspective about the value of an art space for a location.

In contrast to describing the role of the art space in facilitating real estate development processes, the role of the artist in urban development is at times also circumscribed to that of a kind of phoretic relationship with the urban processes around them. A symbiotic relationship distinct from mutualistic or parasitic relationships, phoretic relationships signify a kind of travel relationship between two organisms that does not necessarily benefit or harm the host. One of the founders of Mica Moca in Berlin (Cf. Figure 4.4) phrased it in pragmatic terms: "To do something within the capitalist system of urban development, and not sit and complain, not that we drive this change, rather we are riding it, take advantage of what's available."[24]

In all these cases, there is an awareness and strategic perspective about creativity and the role of artists within an economic structure. They identify the broad applications of creativity in the city, in facilitating real estate development,[25] in human capital approaches for urban economic development[26] and bolstering image

that are driven by creative actors. Bader/Bialuch (2008); Hee et al. (2008).

[23] OBL5. Personal Interview. 21 June 2012.

[24] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.

[25] Zukin (1982); Cole (1987); Hall/Robertson (2001); Lloyd (2002); Lloyd (2006); Ponzini/Rossi (2010).

[26] Hall (2000); Glaeser/Mare (2001); Florida (2002); Krätke (2004); Florida (2005); Glaeser (2005); Rausch/Negrey (2006); Markusen/Schrock (2006); Markusen (2006); Reese/Sands (2008); Markusen et al. (2008); Hoyman/Faricy. (2009); Boschma/Fritsch (2009); Krätke (2010); Keane (2011).

and tourism.[27] Indeed, the interviews in both cities exposed conditions that are reflected the vast literature in urban studies. These examples reflect the ubiquity of the discourse–clearly no longer restricted to academic or policy discussions, and having infiltrated the urban context in such an overwhelming way as to form a cornerstone of their enabling condition. Creativity has a role in the city, and artists have access to this. If they indeed enjoy a phoretic relationship with the city, riding the wave, then they stand to benefit and suffer with its ebbs and flows. Perhaps, in riding however, they are withstanding its currents better than others.

In analyzing the means by which they ride, the art spaces become attached to a form of creative capital that results from the enabling condition. Krätke defines the "creative capital of cities" as the "ability of urban economic actors to produce. . . innovations on the basis of relational assets that are socially produced within a city."[28] It is useful here to define creative capital as a fungible capital, whose value is measured in its ability to leverage interests. Though Bourdieusian ideas of cultural capital are instructive in understanding how capital can take different forms, the creative capital of artists in the city is not just embodied, objectified or institutionalized.[29] Rather, the value of creative capital is gauged in the following empirical examples through its exchange value, as manifested in their various place-making strategies.

As will be evident, the creative capital of artists can be defined in terms of their ability to enact their interests in their place-making activities. The examples will define creative capital in terms of its exchange value in leveraging financial and political capital. Doing so, it borrows from Schumpeterian ideas of "exchange value" as social value-in-use.[30] It adopts an understanding of the value of capital as something that is socially determined and encompasses a value-creation process. In Schumpeter's discussions of "money," he differentiates between money price and commodities; whereas the price of commodities can be measured by the traditional supply and demand apparatus, the price of money is measured in its exchange value.[31] Here, exchange value is attributed to the abstract concept of creative capital rather than the material commodity.[32]

This malleable understanding of capital valuation establishes the foundation for understanding the utility of creative capital in the following examples. Creative capital is not like an object of art in its valuation, which is determined based on a supply and demand market; the value of creative capital is determined by its exchange. As such, the following two sections illustrate how the art space exposes the values established in the course of these exchanges; through the art space, it is possible to grasp the

[27] Miles (1997); Kraus (2004); Höpner (2005); Miles (2005).
[28] Krätke (2011) p. 3.
[29] Bourdieu (1983); Bourdieu (1986).
[30] Schumpeter (1909).
[31] Schumpeter (1939) p. 547.
[32] This is therefore also distinct from Logan and Molotch's application of use and exchange value, which they attribute to various commodities relating to the material world of the city, which stand to be exploited for its value (1987).

tangible returns on exchanging creative capital in Beijing or Berlin.

Exchanging creative for financial capital

The value of the creative capital can at times be measured in financial terms, when traded for financial capital. If the landlord believes that art spaces are at the forefront of creativity-led real estate development, it can be especially useful when negotiating rental terms.

Even the aforementioned example of OKK Raum29 helps to illustrate this when they point to the below-market price rent they are able to enjoy in their rental agreement. Indeed, rental agreements offer an interesting insight into the valuation of creativity. Several art spaces described their experience with private property owners as being mutually beneficial. In terms of real estate development, private owners seem to understand the "added value" that the art spaces would provide their properties. Unlike OKK Raum29, which has the clause allowing their landlord to evict them on short notice, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien negotiated a twenty-year contract with Berggruen Holdings in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Unlike DeGeWo, which represents one of many instruments in the privatization of public properties[33] and retains close public sector connections, Berggruen Holdings is a private investment company founded by multi-billionaire Nicolas Berggruen. Berggruen, son of renowned art collector Heinz Berggruen, is himself an avid art connoisseur, presiding over his own museum as well as the international councils of major art institutions the Tate Gallery in London and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Still, the negotiations for Künstlerhaus Bethanien took about a year.[34]

This interview excerpt confirms that the value-proposition was not only applied in their rent negotiation, but that it was an improvement from their last host, a district-owned space:

> JR: What I find interesting is that some groups strategically take advantage of it. So they say, you want as a real estate person to develop this area, we want to participate and use this space, we know we can bring some value to this space as artists and you should give us this space for free-
>
> KB: Yeah
>
> JR: -or for low rents, and they're strategically able to use it.
>
> KB: That's what we did here. (laugh) That's what we did.
>
> JR: In this negotiation process, right?
>
> KB: That's why the rent is lower than in the community building![35]

[33] Following Berlin's reunification, a number of instruments including the semi-public DeGeWo and instruments such as the *Liegenschaftsfond* were set up to group publicly owned properties and make them available for private investors.

[34] OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.

[35] OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.

The “community building” was a building owned by the district of Kreuzberg where the Künstlerhaus Bethanien was previously located. After many years at the previous location, they found it impossible to share due to the changing composition of other renters. While they did not move due to financial reasons, the director noted surprise that they were able to get better conditions with the often vilified private real estate company. Better conditions implied for them more security, having a contract for twenty years, and lower rent than in the district-owned building. This certainly begs the question as to why a private real estate company might agree to these kinds of conditions. The rental negotiation approach of Platoon Kunsthalle may offer some insight.

The Platoon Kunsthalle is based in Berlin-Mitte, is part PR branding and consulting, connecting artists and designers with corporate clients, part art residency and performance space. Their building consists of portable shipping containers. In 2012, they moved into their third location. The space they need is essentially an empty lot with enough space for several shipping containers. The cultural manager of Platoon describes their negotiation approach:

> We create a cultural value for the space, which translates also in a real estate value, which, because it becomes an address in the head of people, it’s not just an abandoned lot. It’s– something happens there, and obviously the value goes up, everyone wants to go there. Everywhere where we were before, there is either a design hotel or something more in this direction. So, that’s how we can create a deal with the owners where we basically add this value, pay a really minimum rent, just cover some costs and help to raise the profile of the lot really. Which is not obviously our aim, it’s just a consequence of what we do.[36]

Platoon makes a value-proposition for a temporary rental contract with very favorable terms for using an empty lot for an art space. They are able to take advantage of the assumptions made about the speculative returns on art spaces increasing property value in order to access spaces for very little cost. Over the years, these assumptions have also proven real with the arrival of commercial ventures, presumably able to pay premium for the location, which Platoon has helped to establish as a destination. In making this proposition, they simultaneously distance themselves from the real estate development, rejecting their responsibility or part in potential displacement or gentrification processes. For their own interests, when they coincide with property owners, this strategy works. The broader impact is not their concern because they view the development processes as inevitable. One weakness of the metaphor of the phoretic relationship is that it leaves no room to ask whether “riding” this urban change ever helps to accelerate these various processes. Without any chance at “control” in this case, however, it is impossible say whether Platoon’s rental strategy has accelerated changes.

[36] OBL18. Personal Interview. 6 July 2012.

Figure 4.5: An image of Platoon from the courtyard while they were still in the relocation phase. Comprised of shipping containers, Platoon is portable, and this is their third location in Berlin-Mitte.

Figure 4.6: A street view of the re-opening of Platoon at a new location. From the street, multiple floors are visible due to the glass windows. People sprawled onto the street waiting to get in. Because of capacity issues, security closely gated the door to control the number of people inside.

Figure 4.7: Inside the re-opening of Platoon. For the celebration, multiple bars were set up with sponsorships to reduce the cost of drinks.

In terms of creating a destination, the 798 compound in Beijing from Chapter 1 from the has become a major tourist attraction since it was designated an official cultural site and infrastructural investments were made before the onslaught of foreign visitors for the Beijing Olympics in 2008. On the occasion of a 798-based artist being locked out of their space by the Seven Stars Group, which administers the area, a meeting was convened, which included several renowned artists, gallerists and shop owners based in 798. They hoped to form an association with a shared statement about the value they brought to area.[37] Since the area turned into a major tourist destination, buildings have been taken over by numerous businesses and the property value has sharply increased. The Seven Stars Group regularly chain-locked doors, and turned off electricity or water under the premise that the renters were not meeting rental agreements. Throughout the meeting, artists made the argument that the attraction of 798 was the art, not the cafes and businesses that came after. One artist suggested that they organize a kind of strike, closing all the gallery doors, to make their value clear to the management. They were seeking a means to make the value tangible for the management, estimating the costs that would be incurred if tourists did not come. Ultimately, the discussion landed on the consensus that a financial proposition would be the most effective route towards leveraging their position.

Perhaps in part as a result of better statistics in Berlin about what tourists' pref-

[37] Following the meeting, a demonstration in the streets of 798 marching from the place of the meeting to the office of the management ensued. 798 Meeting. Personal Recording. 12 November 2012.

erences, financial indicators are at the base of some valuations of these kinds of art spaces. If five in seven tourists come to Berlin for the independent creative scene,[38] and the tourist industry is "experiencing higher growth rates than any of the city's other business sectors,"[39] then it certainly makes sense that the business lobby and advocates of art spaces find common ground for lobbying work. In a panel discussion, Jan Eder, Managing Director of the Industrie- und Handelskammer Berlin (Chamber of Commerce Berlin), made clear that looking at the revenues and employment of people in the creative industries, the "free scene" that includes many of these art spaces makes up about ninety-five per cent of the overall cultural scene. The Chamber of Commerce calculates the investment potential of this sector, arguing conversely that the major cultural institutions receive the vast majority of the public investments, producing only a minimal amount of the revenue that the broader cultural industries contribute to.[40]

Both the example of 798 and the case for public investments in the cultural industries point to the limits of the market perspective. In numerous interviews it seemed that artists believed the commercialization of 798 was inevitable. Just as Platoon organizes their contract agreements for a limited amount of years, there are limits to the exchange of creative to financial capital. When the financial interest is significant enough, creative capital cannot compete. Where competing financial interest overpowers artists' abilities to sustain their spaces, they may turn to political capital.

Exchanging creative for political capital

The story of 798 from Chapter 1 serves as a powerful illustration of exchanging creative for political capital. Inviting foreign embassies to attend an international art festival was a strategy to help establish 798 as a destination with symbolic value for Beijing. The positive attention from important international political figures played no small part in ultimately overturning plans to demolish 798 in favor of protecting it under auspices of "Chinese cultural heritage." Since this overturn, any international festival in 798 has been under the management of the Seven Stars Group, which manages the area. This implies that all contacts, official invitations, press releases, and so forth are under control. Before the co-optation of the festival by the municipal management, however, it served as device for exchanging creative for political capital. Statements in the media by important political figures certainly raised the international profile of 798.

Compared with the ability of financial interests to determine the access and price of spaces, political capital can powerfully serve artists in fundamental, often existential ways, because there are times when the financial value is not immediately recognized, where the speculative machinations do not favor the artists.

[38] Radialsystem (2012).
[39] Berlin in Brief (2015).
[40] Radialsystem (2012).

When creative capital turns into political leverage, even the "growth machine" characterizing cities like Beijing can be tamed.[41] Describing the experience of negotiating space in Caochangdi, the founder of Nali Nali (Cf. Figure 4.1) describes how political leverage helped to preserve the area where his art space is located:

> The power brokers, the landlords or the government officials that work as the municipal advisors for the village saw this as like fabulous. But at a certain point, it was– now that you've done that, now that we have that establishment, now what we can do is take over your space, tear down your buildings, do condominiums. Or some other developments, because that's to our advantage. They actually sent out notices to Platform China, to 3 Shadows, to Ai Wei Wei's art archive space down the road. Well, thank you very much, we've decided your buildings have all been constructed illegally, without proper leasing so we're going to be tearing them down. But the thing that's a little bit different with Caochangdi is that a large number of these were set up by major public galleries from other parts– from Europe and North America... Then these places went to their embassies... and the embassies phone like central planning in Beijing... And they say, well, what are your– these villagers– or landlord people think they're doing? These people have put in like hundreds of thousands of dollars in these buildings. You can't just take them down... Then Beijing's kind of going, OK, this is looking like a bit of hassle, like, this is embarrassing... So a phone call gets made. So it's, can you guys chill out? You can't do this, it's not working out. Because these galleries are known internationally. And they're run by Europeans.[42]

The source of the political leverage was not only trading in creative capital, but also their social capital as foreigners. The international character of the spaces seems to have been an important factor in influencing decision-makers in Beijing. This story highlights the confluence of multiple factors–it is the nature of these spaces as art spaces, which have attracted large amounts of foreign financial investment and generate significant revenues, but also the backgrounds of the artists, which is often international or have international renommée and garners them a unique influence. This is best evidenced when contrasting Caochangdi or 798 with the Yuanmingyuan art village, which was torn down.[43] It can also be contrasted to the normal tactics of exercising municipal power to drive out renters, as Nali Nali's founder describes:

> The way it works is, you say no, and they say yes, and then you say, we're not leaving, then they turn off your electricity, and then if you don't go, they get thugs and they beat the shit out of you and they pull you out of your spaces. Some of the landlords here, basically, corrupt officials that run Caochangdi, were made to understand, you can't do this to European gallerists. You can't. You're just going to have to find another way. But then it kind of evolved. That was three years ago, that major crisis. And I think

[41] See e.g. Zhang (2008) applying the Molotch's (1976) idea of city as growth machine to Beijing.
[42] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.
[43] Ren/Sun (2012).

> since then they found other ways to think about building and developing a community in conjunction with– in the same way that 798, which people saw as very valuable, now I think that some of the city people in the village see it as very valuable too. So they're supportive at this point.[44]

In this case, the political influence through which decision-makers "were made to understand" was a necessary prerequisite for speculating on the financial capital that these art spaces may help to generate. Decision-makers in Caochangdi shifted their positions on the legality of these art spaces once more powerful political actors exercised their influence. In accord with the literature about land use and land rights in China, the story of Caochangdi illustrates the political nature of what is legal.[45] Though landlords remain motivated by financial interests, their appreciation of the value of art spaces was only possible with the chain of activities that began with art spaces taking advantage of their unique position and political access to embassies.

While having access to foreign embassies in Berlin may not exact the same kind of influence, artists are also active in political lobbying and activism. Organizing for their common interest, groups like the Koalition der Freien Szene (Coalition of the Free Scene) and Projektnetzwerk Berlin (Project Network Berlin) have effectively lobbied the Berlin Senate for more recognition, funding, and policies to support art spaces outside of the major publicly funded artistic institutions like museums, theaters and opera houses. The Coalition argues that tourists in Berlin are attracted by the artistic initiatives of the "free scene" and that five in seven tourists come for artistic happenings in the city.[46] The Chamber of Commerce Berlin agrees, arguing that unlike Munich or Hamburg, Berlin defines itself culturally and yet the "free scene" receives only five percent of the public funding, about half of which is from the federal government (and not the city of Berlin).[47] Moreover, the Coalition argues that the decision-making behind the distribution of properties in the *Liegenschaftsfond* (public real estate holdings) must give consideration to maintaining the creative authenticity of Berlin and not just succumb to the highest bidder.[48]

The leveraging of creative for political capital by these advocacy groups function in two ways. Firstly, they are seeking out public funds for their art spaces, either in a greater proportion of the existing city budget, or through additional revenue streams such as a new tax for tourists. Secondly, and very similar to the Caochangdi experience in Beijing, the Coalition is attempting to shape the way that public properties and lands are being distributed. In both Beijing and Berlin, it is already established art spaces that provide the case for their main line of argument. The artists, art spaces and activities are major sources of value, they argue, both in terms of prestige and in terms of bolstering the tourism industry.

[44] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.
[45] Hsing (2010); Ren/Sun (2012); Wu (2011); Liu/Lin (2014); Liu/Fang/Li (2014).
[46] Radialsystem (2012).
[47] Ibid.
[48] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.

Taken in tandem, the exchange of creative capital for financial and political capital serves these art spaces in initiating and sustaining their art spaces. This also reflects how the elevation of creativity to an urban imperative has allowed transnationally mobile artists to exercise tangible influence on the urban landscape of cities like Beijing and Berlin. Trading in creative capital can also imply at times conflicting tendencies: sometimes, properties are valorized and neighborhoods commercialized; other times, entire districts avert condominium takeover and powerful market influences are subverted by the power of "cultural heritage" or "creative authenticity." Indeed, rather than a driving force or parasite trading in creative capital reaffirms a kind of phoretic behavior.

As defined previously, phoresis is a kind of symbiotic relationship characterized by one organism traveling with another without benefiting or harming the host. It is behavior that can easily be framed in the broader context of a facilitative enabling condition that induces certain types of behavior. It renders the strategies largely reactionary or adaptive, as a means to sustain alternative interests and spaces in spite of a context. It does not offer rich evidence that these at times subversive renderings of creativity (aggressively taking advantage of creativity for location marketing in order to get lower rents, for instance) ever intend to subvert the structures in which they are located. So, for instance, while 798 offered an isolated example of how political influence could be wielded, it did not change the decision-making structures, only the decision outcome. In fact, changes were put in place by the Seven Stars Group, as mentioned in the introduction, to restrict future ability of artists to leverage political and media contacts by formalizing the organization of the international festival. All contacts are filtered through the municipal administration.

Yet there is another interpretation of the consequences of these practices that are difficult to dismiss, even though they may be contradictory. As described above, art spaces have served to valorize property, perhaps even accelerating the real estate development and commercialization processes. In other cases, they have moderated market influences of property commercialization through the preservation of entire areas from demolition and development. These examples illustrate how their participation in urban contestations serve to accelerate or slow down certain ongoing processes. Rather than just passively riding along, they affect the organism they are riding. Through these creative capital exchanges, it is possible to see how place-making strategies can take a diversity of forms towards contradictory ends.

4.2 Non-profit with variegated resources

Yet in reviewing the diversity of place-making practices, the exchange of creative capital does not emerge as a singular, dominant strategy. The non-profit nature of most art spaces is at times by design and at times by default. It coincides with already discussed ideological motivations that seek to escape the commercial art world, or

to create islands within the neoliberal city. This idealism is often enabled, however, by commercial undertakings, financial transfers and grant funding, all focused on generating resources in order to meet operating costs.

Resources take different forms, but their value is not determined in exchange. In distinction to creative capital, defined as a kind of symbolic capital whose value is determined through its exchange, financial resources discussed here (and temporal resources discussed in the next chapter) are generated through the commercial diversification of the art space activities, financial transfers from work or sources elsewhere, or grant applications.[49] In this way, it is more similar to a commodity, described by Schumpeter as having a price value determined by demand and supply.[50] In the scheme of making art spaces, however, it is the access to these resources (rather than their exact value), that makes the variegated resources an interesting focus. Their ability to access or generate a diversity of resources is key to dealing with operating costs, which additionally makes these art spaces "resourceful." While they are resourceful, these examples deal with both their ability to come up with clever solutions as well as a consideration of the resource itself.

Alongside the commercial undertaking like brewing and selling beer (mentioned earlier with regards to the nostalgic motivations by HomeBase Project in Berlin), many art spaces have diversified the commercial use of their space. One way of generating revenue includes developing a cafe or bar area within the art space, which is the strategy of Za Jia Lab in Beijing (Cf. Figure 3.11) and Agora Collective in Berlin. For both Za Jia Lab and Agora Collective, they do not have many cafes and bars in the direct vicinity and it also helps to bring people in for events. In addition, Agora Collective also rents out co-working space and hosts a diversity of projects that help contribute to the cost of running the space. These undertakings often originated from need. Several curators in Beijing, including one of the founders of Arrow Factory, indicated a shift following the financial crisis in 2008 that led spaces to explore alternative practices outside of the commercial art market.[51]

In addition to these commercial developments, transnational resource transfers often play a critical role in enabling these spaces. It suggests that access to resources beyond the city where they are located is an important means of sustenance. As working artists, many of the art space founders and curators also sell their art works. For instance, the artists running TJ in China indicated that they work elsewhere in Mexico and the U.S. in order to fund their art space in Beijing:

> Right now we're going back to Mexico, because we ran out of money, like the real issue. So I have to go back to Mexico, get money and come back. It's not that easy, you know, I have– that's where we most show, the 29th

[49] Resource as employed in this section does not only refer to the access to networks and social capital as studied by Blokland and Savage (2008), and Van Eijk (2010), but also financial resources.

[50] Schumpeter (1939).

[51] CBJ2. Personal Interview. 10 October 2012 and OBJ1. Personal Interview. 6 October 2012.

> we open a show in San Diego of this month, the 30th, a small artist-run gallery but does really good shows in Santa Monica opens a show of mine. Then January we have a couple of shows. So there is a possibility that I could trade something for another year of TJ in China.[52]

This implies a barter system of art for art space. By selling art works in another place, on the art market, they could sustain the costs of running TJ in China.

Similarly the founder of Blackbridge Art Space has gallerists in Europe: "I sell my paintings in Europe, and I had saved some money to come here also," again reiterating the possibility of transnational resource transfers.[53] Of note, these artists sell their work outside of China, not because there are no resources for art in China. Rather, it is reflective of the closed market that non-Chinese artists often face in China. Several artists mentioned that the art market in China is almost exclusively focused on Chinese artists. While the artists seek to make art spaces in Beijing for a variety of reasons, they sell their work elsewhere because they face barriers to the art market in China.[54] They have access to markets elsewhere, however, and this is key for transferring the resources to sustain their art space.

The resource transfers are also evident in Berlin, where art space founders are similarly transferring resources often generated from employment in other places. One of the co-founders of Kurt Kurt regularly teaches in Scandinavia and this is one of the sources of revenue that enables them to run their art space in Berlin.[55] The founder of Institut für alles Mögliche also has a teaching position in Leipzig, where he commutes to for work.[56] These teaching engagements allow the founders of these art spaces to not depend on the art space as a source of income.[57] These art spaces become a project through which they are able to explore different artistic practices, curate programs and invite other artists for various forms of exchange that do not have a commercial purpose. This provides an interesting contrast between the artistic practices protected from the art market and commercialization and the entrepreneurial strategies involved in the making the art space.[58] While they may take advantage of their symbolic values, have an understanding of markets, they are using the financial capital generated through these strategies to do something outside of the market system.

The residency component of many art spaces is not only an artistic undertaking, a part of building network and fostering dialogue, but it often reflects the role that differential cost of living plays in these art spaces as destinations. For instance, the

[52] OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
[53] OBJ3. Personal Interview. 25 October 2012.
[54] ABJ14. Personal Interview. 3 December 2012.
[55] OBL12. Personal Interview. 10 August 2012.
[56] OBL9. Personal Interview. 6 August 2012.
[57] Teaching is a common form of employment, often engaged in elsewhere for people living in Berlin. This is echoed by Graw in her description, "The majority of Berlin's art historians and cultural critics, however, are commuters, earning a living by teaching in other cities." Graw (2014) p. 56.
[58] It also supplements Lange's work on "culturepreneurs" with entrepreneurial approaches form the visual arts. Lange (2007).

Figure 4.8: The street view of the entrance to the courtyards that house Blackbridge Art Space, located in Hei Qiao village (黑桥村) in northeast Beijing, which is where the name is from. Hei Qiao means black bridge. Located near the airport, Hei Qiao is not easily accessible by public transport. Rather, many of the artistic residents in the area either drive or call private car services to pick them up. Still, simply giving directions to a taxi driver requires intimate knowledge of the roads, many of them unpaved. The buildings are located on land areas legally zoned for farming. The landlords are farmers who built or allowed the construction of these structures for revenues. Although following in familiar aesthetics of courtyard-based complexes and industrial materials for the metal doors and indoor beaming, these buildings were all constructed after 2005. In several interviews, the circulating aesthetics was a recurrent theme; farmer-landlords copied post-industrial forms and materials in building these spaces because they saw this as what artists were interested in. Artists, in turn, found this often unpractical because of the poor heating.

Institut für alles Mögliche founder describes the cost of being a resident in his space, for "people that come from London for example, or Dublin, that's actually laughable prices. How I've understood it until now, they pay twice as much for half the size."[59] Moreover, he argues that Germans have access to other networks through which they are able to find studio spaces for cheaper rent.[60] The makeup of artists that use his residency space are therefore almost all non-German. Similarly, HomeBase Project in Berlin also hosts a residency program that is comprised almost exclusively of non-German artists who use the residency as a means to get to Berlin.[61] The artists pay for the residency program, sustaining the operating costs of HomeBase Project, and directly transferring financial resources from elsewhere. It could be interpolated that artists arriving in Berlin-Wedding from Tokyo will find the relative cost of the residency program to still be significantly lower than the cost of living in general where they are coming from. Indeed, the direct resource transfers as related to the residency programs are highly dependent on differential costs of living.

Yet these resources transfers also indicate that these art spaces are run by a narrowly resource-rich group of actors who are either able to sell their art work for enough to live on in a different country, who are institutionally supported through teaching jobs, or for whom the cost of residency programs are simply less relative to the cost of the places where they normally live. These resource surpluses serve to financially sustain these art spaces. Moreover, these are pursuits (both in the art production and sales as well as the teaching) that do not demand all of their time. Kurt Kurt and Institut für alles Mögliche, for example, have enough time outside of these engagements to also run an art space. It is important to note that these transnational resource transfers are likely not specific to Beijing or Berlin as specific cities, but specific to resource access. In many cases, the resource surplus relates to differentials in terms of costs of living. Yet it is important to note that this is also not so simply the case all the time–the cost of living in Tijuana, for example, cannot be deemed much higher than the cost of living in Beijing. Rather, it is about "elsewhere" as a signifier of access to resources and relative cost, not as a specific geography of affordable cities.

In addition to access to transnational resources on an individual level, many art spaces also have access at an institutional level through funding organizations. For example, Arrow Factory in Beijing received funding from a foundation in New York for two years.[62] Like other examples already mentioned, the founders of Arrow Factory do not earn an income through the art space, but rather any revenues they receive through projects or sales of their self-published book is reinvested in the

[59] OBL9. Personal Interview. 6 August 2012. *"Leute die aus London kommen zum Beispiel, oder Dublin sind das eigentlich lächerliche Preise. Wie ich das bisher verstanden habe. Sie bezahlen das doppelte für die halbe Grosse."*

[60] This is reflected in the media with articles about both Berlin and Beijing, see e.g. Reyes (2007); Levin (2010).

[61] OBL5. Personal Interview. 21 June 2012.

[62] OBJ1. Personal Interview. 6 October 2012.

Figure 4.9: Supermarkt is located on the ground floor of an apartment building in Berlin-Wedding.

space.[63] This is possible because the founders are financially independent, having other income, like the aforementioned examples from Kurt Kurt and Institut für alles Mögliche. For Arrow Factory, the art space is not a source of employment, but an investment.

The Supermarkt space in Berlin was able to secure EU funding for three years as part of a financial sponsorship program to help new institutions become economically sustainable.[64] But due to the investments they made in renovating the large ground floor spaces, which were formerly used as a supermarket, they still employ a mixed strategy for funding and expected that it would still take several years to make up their investment. These grant-funded spaces are therefore also characterized by the kind of diversification that characterizes spaces like Agora Collective. Supermarkt regularly rents out their space for events and conferences, and also rents separate ground floor spaces in adjacent buildings to sublet as co-working spaces. Thus, grants become one source of revenue among many.

The process of applying for and receiving grants, however, was a challenge. One recurring sentiment was that public-sector funding often had prohibitively high bar-

[63] Their book is printed in Beijing, co-published with Sternberg Press in Berlin.
[64] OBL25. Personal Interview. 24 August 2012.

Figure 4.10: The installation “Architecture as Human Nature” curated by Paulina Olszewska in the renovated Supermarkt space. Formerly a supermarket, the open plan inside allows for a number of different uses, including conferences and performances. Photo source: Supermarkt 2012 http://www.facebook.com/ArchitectureAsHumanNature.

riers of entry. This was a factor of both the complexity of the applications, the time required to complete them, and at times a barrier of language. For instance, Home-Base Project applied to a major German foundation for a grant, investing much time in this, but were discouraged by the rejection. Specifically, it was a result of the time they had to invest in writing the grant and that they had hired a grant writer.[65]

The artists at the Institute for Provocation in Beijing made an additional argument that it is easier to get funding for a foreign artist than a foreign-run organization.[66] And the founders of both Nali Nali in Beijing and Art Laboratory Berlin described their experience that it is easier to get project-based funding rather than funding for the overhead costs of an art space.[67] This is the basis for the advocacy work of Koalition der freien Szene and the Projektnetzwerk Berlin. While there exists project-specific funding or artist-specific funding, the art space suffers because operating costs are often excluded from the funding. This again reinscribes the need for art spaces to diversify their sources of revenue (like Za Jia Lab and their cafe), to reduce operating costs (like Platoon does in their land use negotiations), to transfer resources from selling art work (like TJ in China), to transfer resources from employment elsewhere (like Kurt Kurt), to design residency programs where artists pay to participate (like Institut für alles Mögliche), or to apply for structural funding (like Arrow Factory).

These last considerations delineate the limits of this resource-rich group. Financing and operating art spaces is a different undertaking to financing or making art, regardless of the conflations of art space and art work as discussed in conceptual motivations in Chapter 3. Art spaces require a broad and diversified approach of exchanging the value of creative capital, and accessing or generating variegated resources. Therefore, entrepreneurial tendencies and personal investments are common. Even when institutional support may be available for specific projects or renovations, the kind of public support art spaces receive is not the same as the subsidies that the opera houses in Berlin receive.[68] These various delineations have a major impact on the spatio-temporal consequences. If relegated to hustling, bartering, or negotiating a currency predicated on symbolic value, if sustained only through the ad hoc commercial ventures, personal transfers and project-based funding, these art spaces might indeed be less material and more temporal expressions. How these practices result in tangible spatio-temporal consequences are considered further in the following chapter.

[65] OBL5. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[66] ABJ12. Personal Interview. 10 December 2012.
[67] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012. and OBL2. Personal Interview. 30 July 2012.
[68] This is often the illustrative dichotomy used by the Koalition der Freien Szene in their advocacy work for more public sector support for art spaces.

Chapter 5

Consequences – Spatio-temporal Expressions of Mobility

The diverse conceptual motivations from Chapter 3 and place-making practices from Chapter 4 result in "spatio-temporal expressions." The "spatio-temporal" connotes the inseparability of space and time in conceptualizing the resulting art space. Massey has long conceptualized space and time as inextricably tied concepts, challenging the dualism in which time is privileged over space.[1] The spatiality of the art space is very much dependent on its temporal characteristics, and vice versa, they are mutually constituting as will be evident throughout this chapter. "Expression" is used to indicate that the manifested art space is an act and not an object. The material consequence of the art space as seen and described, is something that is enacted, but not established in the form of a permanent, physical space. Thus, the consequences of the aforementioned practices are described here will be in terms of the art space as "spatio-temporal expressions."

Furthermore, these spatio-temporal expressions are also attached to various modes of mobility. The nature of these expressions are contingent on the mobility of resources, ideas and people. To the extent that this contingency is reflected in the temporary quality of some art spaces, the examples underline the point that "mobilities are all about temporality."[2] Both Urry and Virilio examine temporality as a repercussion of new technologies and infrastructures, which inevitably lead to an acceleration characterized by "speed" and "instantaneous time."[3]

These conceptualizations of accelerating temporality ultimately imply determinis-

[1] Massey (1992); May/Thrift (2001).
[2] Urry (2000) p. 105.
[3] Urry (2000); Virilio (1977).

tic notions about the demise of place. For Virilio, temporality is focused on the nexus of speed and power. Through an analysis of the military, he presents a politics of speed that is focused on movement in order to claim territory. For Virilio, it is not about the territory, but about the exigency of movement that establishes power. Furthermore, through media technology, he argues that while previously, "Man lived in a time system of his actual presence: when he wasn't there, he wasn't there. Today we are entering a space which is *speed-space*."[4] Technology enables a kind of speed that becomes the source of power, and facilitates spaces characterized by absence. Similarly, Urry builds on a concept of mobility facilitated through technology, characterized by instantaneous transfer of information and a "heightened temporariness" of everything from products that can be thrown away to jobs which are increasingly based on short-term contracts.[5] These conceptualizations have also often been summed up as "time-space compression."[6]

Yet the art spaces studied here illustrate a variety of facets to justify their characterization as a spatio-temporal expressions, which do not indicate an inevitable compression. Moreover, the modes of precariousness bemoaned by Urry as a main characteristic of instantaneous temporality, are mediated by interpretations of agency also underpinning their mobility. These forms of mobility vary–pertaining to both the inter- and intra-urban mobility of art spaces, moving between different cities or neighborhoods within their city as well as the mobility of art space initiators and the transfer of resources from elsewhere. Indeed, the art spaces serve to challenge the inevitability of acceleration and ephemerality endemic to these discussions of mobility.

This chapter is structured to consider the various facets of these spatio-temporal expressions: precariousness, agency and continuity. The precariousness builds on the previous chapter considering the context of instability and views mobility as an improvisational, adaptive strategy, as a reaction to the changing urban context where they are located. In contradistinction, a discussion of these spatio-temporal expressions as reflections of agency places the focus on access to resources, and the art space as a consequence of surplus time resources, connected to intentional art practices, thus bringing together Chapters 3 and 4. The articulated ideas of nomadism, and in particular the idea of a nomadic figure and nomadic subjectivity has served as a rich site for theorizations that stress the potential of "becoming" to oppose fixed conceptions of identity.[7] Indeed, the concept of "motility,"[8] as the potential to be mobile, may prove useful in helping to understand the underlying power relations. The potential for mobility is as important as actual mobility. This simple counterposition of precariousness against agency does not encapsulate the breadth of spatio-temporal experiences. The continuity perspective challenges the dualistic character of whether the spatio-temporality of art spaces reflects their being either victim or subject-agent

[4] Virilio (2001) p. 70.
[5] Urry (2000).
[6] Harvey (1989); May/Thrift (2001).
[7] Braidotti (1994); Braidotti (2002); Sutherland (2014).
[8] Kaufmann (2002).

of some urban change processes. Though art spaces may represent a "particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings,"[9] the duration of this moment is not a pre-given, segmentation of time. As a result of this, questions about permanence resurface, especially in connection to ideas about "nomadic patterns," which suggest a structure of mobility that does not necessitate increasing deterritorialization.

5.1 Reflections of precariousness

One of the key aspects of the enabling condition that motivates art spaces to engage in various survival strategies is their perceived threat of not being able to maintain their space. In some cases, the temporality of the art space is tied to the displacement processes discussed in the previous chapter. Contracts are dissolved, funding is lost, costs become untenable and art spaces are replaced by more lucrative projects that can afford higher rents. This was the experience of Program in Berlin, a space that ran for five years in Berlin-Mitte, in an area that underwent dramatic transformation being located in the area where the new main train station opened in 2004.[10] After their initial three year rental contract, their landlord increased the rent when they extended the contract for two more years. To the founders of Program, this implied that when their contract extension ended, it would have required their "negotiation and fight" to retain their space.[11] It would be unclear how much or how often they would face these rent increases, and they decided to close the space.

This experience resonates with Nali Nali in their descriptions of being displaced in Beijing-Caochangdi, and with many spaces who understand their existence being in constant competition with other potential tenants who can afford higher rents (Cf. Section 4.1). This uncertain position is both a result and a cause for a weakened position with regards to the contexts in which they operate, creating a distance from the various local issues (Cf. Section 3.4). The "fight" that is required in negotiating a position to stay is primarily a mix of artistic interests to operate in a particular space, but it also seems predicated on a feeling of ownership, a sense of entitlement or a basic sentiment of belonging that is especially handicapped by the mobility of the artists initiating these art spaces.

Some have described the characteristic of being mobile and nomadic as directly related to a touristic idea of being in a place[12] with political consequences. The

[9] Massey (1995) p. 5.

[10] Located in the border area between former East and West Berlin, the area of Berlin-Mitte near to the main train station has undergone a dramatic transformation. This includes the extension of the subway (Line U55), and the construction of several new ministry buildings as part of the government district. The Berlin Senate further published plans in 2015 for a major project called "Europacity" covering a forty hectare area around the main train station. SenStadt (2015).

[11] OBL19. Personal Interview. 3 August 2012.

[12] A growing body of research on the touristification of urban space speaks to these issues. See e.g. Judd/Fainstein (1999); Novy (2013); Füller/Michel (2014).

founder of Liebig12 in Berlin was one of the few art spaces included in the present study that owned their art space, rather than renting. Part of the ownership was about expressing a commitment to the place and making explicit that she did not want to be a tourist:

> So it's very important to not be only a tourist and that's something I learned actually. Where I come from, Florence, because it's 100 per cent touristic place and the people who rules the city just think in these terms. You have a lot of foreign people that also come to study there, university, but they feel themselves not accepted as citizens or anyway they spend there a couple of years, so they don't get involved in the local problems, no? How things get run. And there I thought, wow, that's a dangerous thing, because in this nomadic time where everybody travels so much, spending a year there, a year there, a year there, we are all tourists. And that's beautiful but has also these negative aspects because nobody really feels responsible for the place he is, because you're just there for a short time. And that's of course, gives all the power to the three people sitting on the parliament or whatever. So people are just not reacting, because we're all temporary guests.[13]

Yet while they might not be reacting or getting involved in the political decision-making in some cases (of course some are directly involved politically, cf. Section 4.1), their nomadism is not only a repudiation of responsibility. Though it might reflect a disregard for the long-term consequences of where they are temporarily located, their nomadism is often itself a consequence of what art spaces perceive as ongoing processes they have no control over. For instance, the container structures of Platoon are a means to avoid and pre-empt displacement, an adaptation to the change they forecasted. Their sustainability strategy is described in terms of their ability to move:

> We've been in Berlin for twelve years, but our concept and each of our concept is to be really self-sustainable and somehow nomadic. Our containers we can literally move from place to place. So we're not bound to a specific space. So the project lives on. If it's not here, it's somewhere else. So, that way, we cannot be kicked out somehow. We have our own way. A lot of other projects that you may think are not here anymore, they just still exist in other names, in other forms, somewhere else. The people that did it, they are still here, they are still doing things. Also, maybe let's say, legendary clubs in Berlin like the WMF, you know WMF was like leading the whole subculture club scene in Berlin not commercially, but really like stylistically and everything. And they kept moving every year, they had to move. Not because they wanted to, now people even started to frame them in an academical thing as urban pioneers, because they kept moving nomadic in the city, temporary, autonomous and so on, and everything, but it was just a necessity. They couldn't stay longer.[14]

[13] OBL13. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.
[14] OBL18. Personal Interview. 06 July 2012.

Figure 5.1: Shortly before the performance by Tyler Matthew Oyer “Gone for Gold.” The Liebig12 founder believes that nomadism is connected to a kind of tourism that repudiates responsibility for the place where artists find themselves. While there may be a beauty in hosting artists from all over the world. She sees a danger as it relinquishes decision-making powers to a select few.

Figure 5.2: The street view of Liebig12 in Berlin-Friedrichshain shortly before a performance.

Thus, it suggests that temporality as characterized by nomadism is an adaptation to the context of urban change in which they are embedded. These adaptations are seen as means to survive, but the nomadism that defines their temporal character also complicates the idea of what constitutes "temporary." Rather than being temporary as in closing after a period of time, these spaces are in constant modes of adaptation to the perceived possibility of "kicked out." Unlike other experiences they are aware of, they pre-empt this displacement by creating their "own way," part of which is using shipping containers and moving on a regular basis. Though their residencies in each location were temporary, the mobility of the art space also reflects a kind of continuity.

The reflections of precariousness in fact reveal a diversity of adaptations, which circumvent the vulnerability associated with spatial displacement, as described by Platoon. In fact, what seems to be ephemeral from the outside are on closer view only changing form, not ending. The manager at Platoon insists that art spaces that appear to have closed have actually just transformed into something else. In some cases they exist in other forms in other places, like in Beijing. One of the co-founders of Program in Berlin is also a co-founder of HomeShop, an art and project space in Beijing, that also closed in 2013. In the same year, the other co-founder of HomeShop relocated temporarily to Berlin for a residency with the Institut für Raumex-

perimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments) at Olafur Eliasson's studio.[15] This experience insists that the nature of temporal, nomadic spaces can only be seen as a relational practice with elsewhere. These spatio-temporal expressions cannot be reduced to a manifestation within a specific city, but rather connect places together.

The nature of this nomadism also challenges assumptions about the directionality of movement. It questions the idea of nomadism as progressive, linear or pioneering.[16] Rather than seeking frontiers, the new city with the most appealing conditions, it seems that these movements can also be more circular. There is a circulating component to the practice of art space-making, often connected to the people and resources initiating these projects. The temporary nature of these spaces associated with their nomadism is an adaptation that allows for return. The boundaries between places are blurred and Berlin and Beijing become extensions of each other, as potential hosts for the next spatio-temporal expression. The mobility underpinning Program in Berlin and HomeShop in Beijing, is characterized by a simultaneity, with their founders residing in both cities, returning to both places and "originating" from neither. The mobility reflects circulations that also indicated a kind of continuity.

In addition to circular mobility on an interurban scale, there is also a circular movement on the intra-urban scale as art spaces move within a city. For instance, a number of art spaces in Beijing are seeking locations within the second ring, in *hutong* areas (among them are Jiali, Za Jia Lab, HomeShop, and Arrow Factory included in the present study) after decades of redevelopment of central areas have pushed people out of the inner areas. For example, Arrow Factory describes:

> The contemporary art world's infatuation with overblown proportions, style conscious aesthetics and commerce-friendly 'creative industry' enclaves drove us to conjure up another scenario. . . an ultra small space situated far away from the so-called art districts. . . From such a location we felt we could productively explore the social and political context of the street, overlapping notions of space and place, interruption and interaction, public space and publicness, and envision the potential for transformative practices to enter into everyday life.[17]

> We wanted to be closer to the center of the city, just a place where people in Beijing circulate. An area that is part of people's lives in Beijing.[18]

Part of this return to central neighborhoods in Beijing is also related to new policies that have put *hutong* areas under cultural heritage protections.[19] The preservation policies break with a decades-long urban development process of vertical expansion in the central areas of Beijing. This means that pockets of low-rise buildings are being renovated. The founder of Jiali mentioned that she was tired of working in the 798

[15] This experience was described in an informal interview in Berlin on 20 November 2013.
[16] SenStadt (2007); Misselwitz/Oswalt/Overmeyer (2007); Colomb (2012a).
[17] Ho/Wei/Yao (2011).
[18] OBJ1. Personal Interview. 6 October 2012.
[19] Shin (2010).

area and when she opened Jiali wanted to find a space that was more central, but that the "first reason, very clear reason, is money. It's just less expensive."[20]

The interurban circulations connecting art spaces and people between Berlin and Beijing, and intraurban circulations of art spaces within cities are both tied to adaptive tendencies. Increasing costs connected with an uncertainty about the rate of these increases led them to seek new locations and opportunities. They are moving either in anticipation of expected changes or as a result of changes to rental conditions. These movements at times imply the art spaces are temporary, as they are forced to close, and at times they are simply relocated and at times they take different form. Thus, precariousness is reflected directly in terms of cost-related decisions to move, but also indirectly in their pre-emptive strategies to make art spaces more easily moveable.

These circulations contradict the culture-led regeneration trajectory, where the presence of cultural projects precedes regeneration, redevelopment or gentrification.[21] This literature has long focused on the sites that artists occupy on the periphery,[22] or former industrial spaces,[23] which was the setting for Zukin's influential 1982 work on artists in the city, in *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change.* According to the urban regeneration narrative, artists settle in peripheral, post-industrial spaces that are affordable and valorize this property. In Ley's more recent work about connecting artists with location choices, however, he points out that "their behaviour defies economic rationality" when artists chose central locations.[24] This resonates with the circular movements at both the intra- and interurban scales evidenced with art spaces in Beijing and Berlin. While affordability certainly plays a role (as explained by Jiali above), it is not the only factor: the property where Jiali is located is certainly more expensive than other options like in Hei Qiao, for instance.

Moreover, it seems some of this circulation is based on opportunities unrelated to cost, as shown with the HomeShop and Program founders. Precariousness, in their case, was coupled with opportunity.

5.2 Representations of agency

These various pre-emptive behaviors, selecting shipping containers as the hosting structure for an art space, opting for short contracts and moving on a regular basis, can be interpreted as an adaptation or reaction to the precarious contexts in which the art spaces are being initiated. Yet they also reflect the choices available to the initiators of these art spaces and serve to underline their agency within precarious

[20] OBJ13. Personal Interview. 06 November 2012.
[21] Cole (1987); Miles (2005); Miles/Paddison (2005); Cameron/Coaffee (2005); Porter/Shaw (2008).
[22] Cole (1987); Smith (1996); Zhou/Qu (2009); Ren/Sun (2012).
[23] Lloyd (2002); Miles (2005); Lloyd (2006).
[24] Ley (2003) p. 2534.

conditions. Given the choice available to the art space initiators, temporality also becomes a characteristic of the person and not just the space.

The founders of Kurt Kurt recognize that while their short-term contract situation "sounds unstable and difficult," it is "actually beneficial for us because we don't want to commit and can leave as well." Their rental contract is extended on a month to month basis, and it reflects their vision that they "always saw it as a temporary project. . . so for both sides it's good."[25] While it is a stated choice that they see it as a temporary project, it still exists after more than nine years.[26] There are clearly different time horizons for different art spaces in terms of how they define their temporality.

Like others art spaces, Kurt Kurt is characterized by a mobility that is not tied to the nomadism of the art spaces as described above with Platoon and the founders of HomeShop. Rather, their mobility is reflected in their professional engagements and access to resources from elsewhere. One of the co-founders of Kurt Kurt transfers resources from teaching in other countries to affording the space in Berlin. The reduced cost of commuting within Europe, as well as legal changes enabling easier work within EU countries,[27] enables a kind of "phenomena" where "they live here in Berlin, but once a week or every two weeks they go to Geneva, Lausanne, Paris and so."[28] As someone who has seen a "brain drain" from Berlin in the 1990s, the director of Kunstraum Bethanien argues that for artists involved with university teaching, it's still easier to work in Paris and live in Berlin.[29] Of course, practices of teaching elsewhere in order to generate resources for an art space in Berlin require an advanced education. The possibility is tied to the human capital of some of the art space founders.

Apart from the resources available to some of the art space founders, the Paris reference reflects the role that the relative cost of living in different places plays in these mobility decisions. For many artists who pay for residency programs at the Institut für alles Mögliche in Berlin, the cost of the residency is still less than the cost of rent in places like the UK where they are coming from.[30] Furthermore, the founder of Institut für alles Mögliche explains that these residency projects serve as a kind of stepping stone for artists coming from abroad, reducing the administrative hassle of mobility. For instance, they don't need to apply for a credit check through the Schufa offices in Berlin, a common prerequisite for rental contracts. It can be a difficult process to secure their own space immediately on arrival, and a residency program provides them with housing and working space. This experience where artists pay to participate in a residency program resonates with other residencies organized by Inside Out in Beijing and HomeBase in Berlin.

[25] OBL12. Personal Interview. 10 August 2012.

[26] Kurt Kurt was opened in 2006, and was still open as of January 2015.

[27] The European Parliament confirmed the right of EU citizens to work in EU countries in 2004. European Parliament and Council Directive 2004/38/EC.29 April 2004.

[28] OBL11. Personal Interview. 28 August 2012.

[29] Ibid.

[30] OBL9. Personal Interview. 6 August 2012.

This is also similar to the use of C-Space in Beijing, whose space is divided into public exhibition, office and private studio and living spaces on different levels.[31] For one artist at C-Space, this convenience couldn't be understated, joking that "It's the cheapest hostel I can find in the city [laugh]. Actually, I don't think there's a cheaper hostel." He met the owner in Holland, who decided that rather than open a "*very* small space in Amsterdam," he would go to Beijing where he could explore an interest in contemporary Chinese art, opening a multi-storey art space in Caochangdi, located in the Ai Wei Wei-designed Red Brick Complex.

The case of C-Space reflects a further division sometimes evident between the artists and the art space. Sometimes, artists exhibiting, performing or working in these spaces are attached to project funding that is limited to a time and place. This contradicts the process-oriented conflation of art space as art work presented in Chapter 3, where the process of making the art spaces constituted their art practice. For instance, the Institute for Provocation in Beijing hosts artists from Europe who often have public grants that help to fund their residency for a period in China. This funding gap is a recurrent issue for art spaces, as also evidenced in Chapter 4 with the work of Koalition der freien Szene and Projektnetzwerk Berlin, which provides the impetus for advocacy work to secure public grants for overhead costs.[32]

Whether as a result of differences in the cost of living, of individual-specific human capital resources, or project-based funding, these examples imply a resource surplus on the side of the artist. The resource surplus is not only a social, human or financial form of capital, but also a question of temporal resources. The old adage "time is money" materializes through these art spaces in the sense that they are expressions of surplus time. Time is a resource that is needed in order to initiate and sustain such spaces, and many do so only in the additional free time they might have. Of course, these resources are intertwined. It is often money that facilitates having time, and for people without financial resources, having extra time is not particularly valuable. Following Urry, "Indeed rather than time being like money, money is time (Adam 1990:114). In many cases having a lot of time is of little value to people without money, such as the poor, the unemployed and inmates of total institutions (see Goffman 1968)."[33] The art space curator of Superbien! in Berlin-Prenzlauerberg put it this way:

> It's really hard work. And it's really hard to do that *additional*, to do work where you do not get paid. And many of the people they are engaged in this project scene, they do this with their private money. And it's not only the private money, in my case it's not too much money, but it's my time. And this time, I'm not investing in another business.[34]

[31] ABJ4. Personal Interview. 3 December 2012.
[32] CBL20. Personal Interview. 13 July 2012.
[33] Urry (2000) p. 109-110.
[34] OBL24. Personal Interview. 29 August 2012.

Figure 5.3: C-Space in Beijing-Caochangdi is comprised of multiple floors. While the ground floor is used as an exhibition space and is open to the public, there are residential and private studio spaces above.

Figure 5.4: The art space Superbien! is a greenhouse constructed in the courtyard of the Milchhof studio community in Berlin-Prenzlauerberg. Its low operating costs allow the curator of the space to do most of the work in her spare time.

Figure 5.5: Gland, an art space in Hei Qiao village on the outskirts of Beijing, is surrounded by fields and dirt roads. Numerous farmers have constructed studio-like buildings for artists to use as studios, gallery and living spaces. Gland serves as a space of experimentation for the founder and his artist friends. See also Figure 4.8 for Black Bridge Art Space, located in the same area.

Indeed, the measure of the value of this temporal resource is directly tied to the opportunity costs weighing on the artists in these decision-making processes. It seems that at some point, for some, the cost is too great to continue. The surplus time is not adequate to continue, or maybe there are alternative uses of these resources that become more attractive. One key characteristic for many is the low barrier to exit. It is easy to simply stop, as described by the founder of Gland in Beijing:

> I'm not afraid then, that someday this space will have no money to run it. Because I just– the worst is, if I change this space to my studio. So I don't need to worry about. I also treat this space like– kind of a temporary project. Maybe someday I feel like I have no idea to curate new shows.[35]

But certainly not all artists behind these art spaces drive luxury cars and have multiple gallerists selling their work on three continents. For some it is "hard work," but even then it is also an expression of surplus time. Indeed, the contention that surplus time has little value without other resources is here even more apparent. The

[35] OBJ8. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012.

founder of Gland is an artist with international gallery representation in multiple countries, who travels through the dirt roads of Caochangdi in a white luxury German car. Still, Gland is not a vanity project but rather a space to experiment with things that are not commercially viable as art that he would otherwise sell under his artistic brand. It is an art space that offers an escape from the art market, but as such, is only possible because of the art market on which this artist trades. It is similar to the founders of TJ in China, who described that they were seeking to "trade something for another year of TJ in China."[36] These artists have access to other resources, often from elsewhere, which enable them to invest time in these art spaces.[37] The art space, a spatio-temporal expression in a location, reflects an extension of resources beyond the confines of that city.

Another marker of choice with regards to the temporary nature of these art spaces is a sense that temporality and deterritorialization is a characteristic of contemporary art practice. Beatrice Leanza, a curator and theorist based in Beijing describes:

> The so-called creative community, it's always been accustomed to this form of like constant deterritorialization, you know, this nomadic, temporary form of settlements within clusters or places, spaces that could like be temporarily occupied, you know. And inhabited by a community that really needed it.[38]

In previous writing, she has expanded on the temporal issue of contemporary art:

> Both as a spatial phenomenon and a collective activity the contemporary art sphere in China predicates its existence on a *rhetoric of the temporary* defined by the interplay of two paradigmatic qualities: 1) A constant 'process of reterritorialization' –both material and metaphorical, founded on principles of pragmatism and flexibility and validated by a mode of action that is 'alternative-to' or 'other-than' the mainstream one; 2) A 'participatory praxis' –a collective relational mode of discourse performed as a 'being-together' or 'being-in-common' focusing on productivity rather than objects or individual practice.[39]

This presents the temporary quality of these art spaces as something that defines their art practice. And it again underscores the nature of these spaces as defined as alternatives to institutionalized galleries and museums, as well as a specific kind of artistic practice. Of course this applies to art spaces in Beijing like Gland, TJ in China, "We said let there be space and therefore there was space," as well as those in Berlin like Platoon, Agora Collective or HomeBase. HomeBase founder described one of their earlier projects as such: "The idea was that it's nomadic, that's ephemeral, that's process-based, that's a little bit like a kind of circus thing that comes into town. . . then

[36] See above 4.2, OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.

[37] In this way, it builds on Ley's objection to the dis-location of "transnational cosmopolitan elites" from everyday practices unfolding in a location. Ley (2004) p. 152.

[38] CBJ2. Personal Interview. 10 October 2012.

[39] Leanza (2012) p. 143.

kind of disappears."[40] Temporality as connected to mobility is integral for these artistic motivations.

In addition to this practice, some artists are interested in site-specific work. This lends itself to moving their spaces so as to diversify sites, as described by one coordinator of the Stedefreund space in Berlin-Prenzlauerberg:

> It's often site-specific work, and when you have two years, or around two years to work with one space, and after a while, I think it's boring maybe. In a way it becomes a concept for Stedefreund to move another space, and to have the possibility–it's a new challenge to have a new space, to create new works or to be able to get into a new discussions with new space.
>
> I think we will have to be open to move to other areas. But in a way, it could also be a chance to try new concepts. Maybe not to have one space, but to move to different spaces for temporary times. So it can also be- I would be interested in this, that Stedefreund is more like a label and not connected so much to one space, but more like a label and you can also use different spaces for different exhibitions.[41]

Beyond the site-specificity, this need to move also alludes to the boredom that might accompany stasis. This resonates with the director of Grimmuseum in Berlin-Kreuzberg who is afraid that after investing a lot of energy and time somewhere, he might get stuck:

> But of course if you have to put all your energy in all the time, and you get stuck somewhere– I think the problem is if you get *stuck* somewhere. You're stuck there, you're investing lots of your time, lots of your energy, and it's not– you look forward, and it's not moving forward, because you tried everything already and you're stuck there. And you could go on like many years, but then you have no more energy, it sucks out your motivation at the end."[42]

This fear of being stuck did not prevent him from investing time and energy into the space, but also motivates him to build his network "now," as long as "everyone is here." He builds the Berlin network now, because he predicts that in the future, people will move on elsewhere. For him, the art space was a mode of anchoring within a context where everyone else is moving.

Still, to desire to keep moving, as a part of an artistic practice, or to seek out new, inspirational sites is mediated by the decreasing scope of available options. The co-founder of Mica Moca in Berlin-Wedding, which closed after its limited contract ended, was experiencing challenges when searching for a new space:

[40] OBL5. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[41] OBL22. Personal Interview. 24 September 2012.
[42] OBL4. Personal Interview. 09 August 2012.

Figure 5.6: Located in a storage space on the border of Mitte and Prenzlauerberg in Berlin, it is unclear that Stedefreund would want to stay longer. The idea of site-specificity implies for them that they would be interested in seeking out different sites.

> The problem is that, even if people say they are flexible and they don't want a longer contract than 3 years or something. The chances to move somewhere else is getting fewer and fewer. So the fear at the moment, which doesn't seem to be understood by politicians or whatever, is that the whole art scene might move on. So, they are already saying that Warsaw might be the next Berlin. So people would just move on. Because in their spirit they don't care, artists or whatever, because they know what they want to do. And they can apply and adapt, but for the city it is really, it should be a problem. And they should be more flexible about what's going on. And then it's just more like, manifesting, if you have a contract for 3 years, and then someone else is going in for the first year after 3 years, they can't afford it. So then a shop has to go in there, because it's worn out as an art space. And that's the difference, that the options are not that much anymore, that you can move somewhere.[43]

These interview excerpts seem to directly speak to each other. As Kurt Kurt founders say that they "don't want to commit," the Mica Moca founder responds that part of this is the non-commitment is that this needs to be contextualized in a scheme of decreasing options. The choice to move, which is a theme throughout this section, is situated somewhere between structure and agency.

In their analysis societal relations, Lash and Urry discuss how Beck and Giddens are both interested in this dialectic of structure and agency,[44] yet "no real account is provided as to how human agency is chronically implicated in the very structuring of time (and space)."[45] The lack of human agency is further cited as a chronically missing from global cities literature in Ley's work on transnational space.[46] Further, there are multiple issues with characterizing or interpreting agency, to not conflate it with Western individualism,[47] or to privilege subaltern agency as the primary driving force.[48]

Whether these movements are driven by precariousness, decreasing options or whether they are movements originating from artistic motivations, the resulting consequence for the art space is that they are characterized by mobility. Though Urry would interpret these movements as part of an increasingly temporary existence, a closer reading of the art spaces reveal that other forms of temporality are at play.

5.3 Continuity, rhythm, improvisation

This ambivalent area between structure and agency is additionally complicated when considering the change of these art spaces over time. Attempting to draw out some

[43] OBL15. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
[44] Beck (1992); Giddens (1990).
[45] Lash/Urry (1994) pp. 37, 230.
[46] See e.g. Friedmann (1986); Sassen (1991); Albrow (1997); Beaverstock/Smith/Taylor (2000); Marcuse/Kempen. (2000) and cf. Featherstone (1995); Ley (2004); Sassen (2007).
[47] Herzfeld (2004).
[48] Ong (2011).

patterns or trajectories from the empirical examples, the decisions of the founders reveal spatio-temporal expressions characterized by unexpected forms of continuity and rhythm.

For the founders of Kurt Kurt, their idea was always temporary, but it remains in the same location after many years. This sense of onset inertia was evident in a number of examples. Sometimes this had to do with private, familial issues of having children and wanting to be more stable, sometimes it was related to a desire for more recognition, or sometimes a response to receiving recognition. One of the managers at NGBK, an art association in Berlin that began in 1969 and continues to develop projects from members in their space in Kreuzberg, provided some insight about these developments over time:

> I always think it's quite interesting people start with an idea, and they like and love their opportunities, not to take any risks and they just do it in Berlin. And then there seems to be this moment of them needing recognition from the outside as well, from the *Senat* or from wherever. So it's this kind of, we want to be independent, but we also want to be linked, and we want to be recognized as something, that we do quality stuff or whatever. And then all of the sudden we want continuity. So, first of all, we don't want to take risks. And, you know, we want to be independent, and we want to get out of this contract any minute. And then there's this kind of– we don't want it to change. We wanted the change, and we changed something, but now, please don't make us change it again.[49]

The claim is that the desire for continuity accompanies passing time in a place. There is a tension expressed here between wanting to be independent, seeking out the limited commitment that Kurt Kurt expressed above in terms of a short contract, but that this sentiment will evolve over time. At some point the desire of art places to facilitate change is replaced with a desire for continuity. This seems particularly notable for art spaces as opposed to artists. Through focusing on the development of the art space, this kind of desire for continuity –the longer they stay, the more they want to stay– becomes more evident.

As an illustration of these trajectories towards continuity, one of the founders of Supermarkt in Berlin described transitioning from something nomadic towards something more fixed, "that's how Supermarkt started. It started from the idea of turning our nomadic work into something, into something stable, into something fixed."[50] Making the art space itself was in this way a means to establish some stability in the context of mobile, nomadic projects. Like Grimmuseum, they feel they exist in a context where the default is mobility–and the art space serves as a means to anchor themselves.

The desire for continuity is paralleled by patterns of nomadism that also develop over time with certain learned practices, as described by the founder of Nali Nali with

[49] OBL15. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
[50] OBL25. Personal Interview. 24 August 2012.

regards to the circulation of the idea of "project space":

> Yeah, and then when you run a space like this, I mean, we certainly met like hundreds of emerging Chinese artists. And their connections with us lead them to have links with our other colleagues and friends in other parts of the world. But you also have artists come from all over the world here. And they often have links to, or are connected with, or are managed, other kinds of experimental or alternative, temporary project spaces all over the world. So there's a linkage. A certain kind of nomadic patterns that come up, where artists kind of go to– they have a basis in ways to exchange and move around. And they also bring a certain degree of continuity in terms of practices and activities and approaches because of those exchanges.[51]

This circulation illustrates two consequences: first, that artists who circulate are themselves connected to similar kinds of art spaces, and second, that they bring with them practices, activities and approaches with regards to the making of these art spaces. This resonates with the "models-in-circulation" concept in urban studies, in terms of inter-referencing amongst Asian cities, for instance. Ong describes, "Gestures of inter-referencing are spatializing practices in that by constantly comparing and contrasting cities, new kinds of inter-city relationships are formed."[52] Similarly, art spaces described here as "experimental, alternative, temporary" undergo constant circulation, and evoke patterns that connect the various places where they are located.

The patterns of nomadism, the habitualized mobility as described in the circulation of certain forms of art space is also attributed to artists themselves. In discussing the "Based in Berlin" exhibit set up by the Berlin Senate in 2011 to promote Berlin as a site of art production, the director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien posited that place-marketing using artists as symbols for a location has become a fundamentally anachronistic strategy, with an outdated idea of place:

> Yeah, it's strategic. And it's also an anachronism. Because when partners are supporting artists from their region, then they think that the artists from their region are permanently there. And I think these partners and the governments and other institutions should accept that artists are nomads. And that they're permanently traveling around the world.[53]

Acceptance of the figure of the permanently mobile artist presumes an idea about mobility that is distinctly nomadic. In contrast to dualistic interpretations of "temporary mobility" in contrast to "permanent migration,"[54] permanent mobility suggests an alternative mode of movement "around the world." Yet the project manager at NGBK in Berlin warns that residency programs enabling artists to travel somewhere for a

[51] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.
[52] Ong (2011) p. 17.
[53] OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
[54] Bell/Ward (2000).

year with temporary financing can be exhausting, “I think artists do get tired of it. It’s not this romantic thing about being flexible and mobile all the time, and being able to- you know, where I put my brush that’s where I’m painting, or whatever. I think this is a very romanticized connotation sometimes, which is worn out. Has worn out.”[55] Interestingly, these contradicting statements from Kunstlerhaus and NGBK both focus on determining what kind of patterns or behaviors are outdated. Both statements are furthermore made by art spaces that have enjoyed a decades-long presence in Berlin. It suggests a need to go back further to explore whether artists have indeed become more nomadic over time, or whether this is a more romantic idea, or whether it suggests a life cycle of mobility for artists that simply represents exhaustion. This question of permanent mobility will be revisited in the last chapter.

Here again, a distinction between artist and art space is useful. While the artist might be exhausted from being constantly on the move in search of the next paid residency, those engaged in practices of making art spaces are faced with different kinds of issues with regards to permanence. For many, permanence is untenable and counter to their motivations for making an art space as described in terms of making social sculptures or utopian islands. One art space founder described it this way, “if you want to chisel into concrete, where does your practice go?”[56] Though counter-intuitive, it suggests that the act of making permanent obstructs artistic practice. She did not want to let the demands of running the space get in the way of her work as an artist, and closed the space for a time.

The demands of “permanence” encompass challenges not faced when art spaces are more fleeting in nature. In contrast to the HomeBase projects in New York or Jerusalem, the HomeBase project in Berlin was designed with the idea of being more like a lab where they could try things out. But though there are concrete challenges like rent, there are also more abstract questions like what is permanent, as evidenced in this interview excerpt:

> JR: That’s interesting that the Lab for you is something that’s more, somehow more stable or more grounded, more– kind of has an infrastructure that’s more permanent. Because I think on the longer time frame, for me, the Lab is something that’s really new still. It’s only been here a couple of years. But of course a couple of years compared to the nomadic model is of course really long. So it’s this kind of, the relative length of this temporal aspect, what is permanent and is–
>
> HB: Exactly. Exactly. And I think that also it’s amazing how many challenges come up with this kind of permanence. Like, paying rent for an organization that’s completely volunteer-based, artist-run. It’s a *huge* task to keep this place. In a way, it’s a big hassle. And it’s actually, this grounding aspect, is kind of like, compared to having a free space for two months and moving on and not dealing with all of the logistics that have to go with it– it does bog you down in many ways. It’s a *real* commitment and

[55] OBL15. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
[56] OBJ3. Personal Interview. 25 October 2012.

Figure 5.7: Located in a former brewery in Berlin-Wedding as depicted in the large black and white photograph, HomeBase project in Berlin is primarily an artist residency. This is their common room. Though it had different permutations in other cities that manifested as a "quicker action," the Berlin project serves as a "lab" with a greater sense of permanency.

> responsibility. And that's also interesting. It's something definitely to consider, it doesn't come easy, there's not a huge foundation behind us or anything like that. It's really self-paid, artist-paid residency that helps to cover the rent. So I think it's an interesting, I guess it's not a completely resolved question of permanency and a kind of more nomadic approach. And what is permanent? Is two years permanent or is fifteen years that's going to be permanent?"[57]

Here it becomes clear that permanence is not an objective status, but rather a kind of signifier for dealing with operations involved in running a space. It is a "kind of permanence" where they need to consider staff and costs that is different from more nomadic approaches they had previously taken.

In addition to questions of continuity and permanence, the spatio-temporal expressions are also characterized by other forms of temporality, not defined by permanence or temporariness. These are connected more to ideas of rhythm and improvisation, or disruption.

[57] OBL5. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.

Figure 5.8: At their summer event, HomeBase project's artist residents use their rooms as exhibition or performance spaces. This was the view into one performance piece by resident artist Georgina Porteus from August 2012.

One key component of the activity of the art space centers on events. Unlike galleries, many art galleries did not have regular "opening hours" where people could come in. Of course those spaces with diversified services like co-working spaces or cafes had regular open hours. But even there, the artistic component was rarely an open exhibition, but rather an event. This public component of the art spaces was often limited to the events that were hosted there. This is true for Institut für alles Mögliche in Berlin as well as Jiali in Beijing. Some rely on people walking by and looking through the windows, thus functioning as always "open," such as "We said let there be space and therefore there was space" and Arrow Factory in Beijing (Cf. Figure 6.2). This is also the case for some performances, like Fried Rosenstock's "Lamyris noctiluca" piece at Liebig12 in Berlin in which the artist was visible through the windows and appeared glowing through the night (Cf. Figure 5.9). As described by Liebig12, the artist "lies covered by his luminescent dress like a chrysalis in its cold light. . . Since completely isolated, the artist is becoming incapable to reproduce himself. . . cut out from daily life, exposed to contemplation."[58] The art space serves in this case as a frame for the art, which functions as public art accessible from the street.

Public art in the city has an extensive literature, especially in dealing with the specifically political aspects of public space.[59] Underlying these discussions are the politics of claim, and assumptions about permanence or duration. This literature deals with issues of public funding, location, the publics for whom the art is intended, or the valuation of public art within the art community. Because of their commissioned status and the role of public funding and public space, public art has been scrutinized on multiple fronts, including its complicity with corporate development, "art in urban development is a case of hegemony, in which the status quo, that is, freedom for capital to increase and the unfreedom of the majority population to determine the conceptualisation of the city, is preserved."[60] Circumventing this highly contested area of urban studies, the public nature of the art spaces in the present study is fundamentally different on multiple counts. Though some art works are visible from the street, like the performance of Rosenstock at Liebig12, they do not occupy the street, but a private space. They are usually not financed through public funding, and their aim is not urban regeneration.

Indeed, the publicness of the art spaces is closely tied to events rather than permanent installation. An event-based art public is created for an evening, and is the result of a number of factors. For Panke in Berlin-Wedding, it's partially about location. They are not a space that is easily accessible and they are only open for events, when they explicitly advertise and invite people for "one night artist shows."[61] These one night shows happen for most art spaces at certain intervals, creating a kind of

[58] Liebig12 (2012).
[59] Miles (1997); Deutsche (1998); Hall/Robertson (2001); Sharp/Pollock/Paddison (2005).
[60] Miles (1997) p. 131.
[61] OBL17. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.

Figure 5.9: The artist Fried Rosenstock at the Liebig12 space in Berlin-Friedrichshain was visible through the front windows. The art was meant to be experienced at nighttime, when the lit-up figure was most visible. Photo source: http://www.facebook.com/Liebig12.

rhythm. For instance, Panke usually has events four nights a week, always on the same nights.

Given the broad conceptualization of art space, which is comprised of practices and performances, the event or happening can be both planned and unplanned. After the opening event of "We said let there be space and therefore there was space," another artistic collective broke into their space and stole the main sculptural piece, as described in Chapter 3. Their catalogue gives as much attention to the break-in as it does to the official opening. The artistic event therefore takes on a disruptive, improvised and unplanned temporality.

The focus on the event is a popular trope in theoretical writings on the conditions of postmodernity or supermodernity. Lash and Urry describe it as part of the "final nihilism of. . . reducing time to a series of disconnected and contingent events."[62] For Auge, supermodernity is characterized by an overabundance of events.[63] And Virilio describes the dire situation in which, "from now on, *the only relief is that of the event*, to the point where the temporal horizon is now exclusively on the crest of the anecdotes and ravages of a present that has no future."[64] The art space event in this way echoes some broader theoretical concerns about the reduction of temporal trajectories to present moments. For both Panke's rhythmic regularity with their four events per week, and the unplanned events of "We said let there be space and therefore there was space," the primary concern of their daily practice is on the events. It is tied to the shift towards the performative as described in Chapter 3, and reflects the heightened relevance of events as events are tied with the public.

Beyond the event, there are improvisations found in the disruptive nature of certain cities that some find inspirational. The unplanned, unregulated conditions that provide inspiration resonated with art spaces at the Wiesenberg and the Panke in Berlin and with a resident artist at the C-Space in Beijing-Caochangdi. The co-founder of Wiesenberg describes how "compared to other cities in Germany, Berlin is really without rules. And that's why things like this are possible. . . I think it's exactly there where the rules are a bit foggy, this is where things happen."[65] The founder of Panke describes how she imagined Berlin: "I loved Berlin because [it's] not perfect at all. You found a space, open it, put a fridge with a beer and you're opened. This is how I imagined it."[66] The C-Space artist in Beijing describes:

> Everything is very temporary and very improvised. And in my own analysis, I think, like especially these outskirt areas. Because nobody– you're never really sure how long you can stay here. And you can open a restaurant, but maybe next day you hear, sorry, we have other plans with this environment. So, get the hell out of here. So you build temporary. You improvise. You– like, all these little improvised do it yourself solutions.

[62] Lash/Urry (1994) p. 16.
[63] Auge (1995).
[64] Virilio (2000) p. xi.
[65] OBL26. Personal Interview. 27 September 2012.
[66] OBL17. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.

> That gives a very, very different aesthetic to the environment than what you see in Europe. In Europe, especially in Holland, but also in Germany. Things are so– Things are for eternity. Yeah, maybe not the buildings they build nowadays, because it also needs to be cheaper, but still they will last longer than regular building here. And everything is well-planned out It's working. You don't see like– I don't know, like when you walk here in the night on the street, when the barbecue guys come out, they have a ventilator standing on the barbecue, the electricity wire needs to go somewhere, so it's connected somewhere at the top of the building, totally weird, maybe dangerous constructions, but it gives them much more interesting aesthetic for me to react on or to refer to.[67]

There is artistic inspiration in the improvisations, which evoke a more temporary context of structures. Because things are less regulated, or because rules are subject to change, there is a space that opens for artistic production and art spaces.

This "foggy" legal context is particularly evident in Beijing, described in the previous chapter in terms of the governance of land-use changes. This is not only a part of an enabling condition, facilitating feelings of precariousness. It also shapes the kind of art space being made. The resident artist at Institute for Provocation in Beijing describes that if a space is unused, it is easier to simply use it rather than ask permission. Official permission to use a space is complicated, because often those managing a space do not have the authority to let an artist use the space. This mode of not asking permission, but simply using space is reiterated by a Chinese artist in Berlin who described the tearing down of artists' villages in Beijing:

> I think it's normal, because it has been built illegally. All the artists' villages was actually been built illegally. Can't just built a village by yourself as a farmer, cause the farmland has been planned to do farm work. They're actually not allowed to do that. Because everyone is doing that and in China it's just like, it's different than here, you don't apply for things before. You just do it. You just wait until someone will come and tell you that, that you shouldn't do that. Until that day you can do it. Sometimes if you're lucky, you can be there for twenty years, you can make lots of money from renting. If you're not lucky, you can be torn down next year. So, that's why I'm saying it's actually normal, cause it's not legal [laugh].[68]

In this context, the kind of art space being built must therefore always be prepared for the possibility of demolition.[69] Though the Wiesenberg does not face demolition as the compound is heritage-protected, it is difficult to predict the future because, "This area is changing, we have no idea what will happen."[70]

[67] ABJ4. Personal Interview. 3 December 2012.

[68] ABJ20. Personal Interview. 23 May 2012.

[69] In Jiang's study of art districts in Beijing, this is described as the artists' ignorance of the legal issues around "buying" farmland, which is officially not possible. The land could always be repossessed by the government. Jiang (2010).

[70] OBL26. Personal Interview. 27 September 2012.

For some art spaces, there is little planning involved, but the programming and the practices is more "ad hoc." The co-founder of Arrow Factory in Beijing describes their programming as "totally ad hoc." While they are not completely impulsive, "we like to be able to be spontaneous. It does't seem necessary to have things so mapped out and planned out. The way we work, the nature of the space, we like to be able to respond faster to new ideas."[71] In describing some of the other art spaces in Beijing like Blackbridge Art Space, TJ in China or HomeShop, the co-founder of Nali Nali postulates, "I don't think people have a real clear path or thought about how long they're able to support and do these things. But while they're here, while they're in Beijing, it's something they're interested in doing and seeing how it develops. . . So I think they're mostly temporary spaces."[72] Both in terms of the kind of artistic activity, as well as pertaining to the temporal nature of the art space itself, improvisational tactics are evident.

It is important to again reiterate that the kinds of art spaces here are delineated from galleries and private studios. These spatio-temporal expressions are manifestations of a kind of artistic practice that is interested in alternatives, interventions and as sites of experimentation. It resonates with what Miles describes as "new genre public art," which he defines as something that:

> is process-based, frequently ephemeral, often related to local rather than global narratives, and politicised. It represents the most articulate form of a wider disenchantment with the artworld conventions still embodied by most public art during the 1980s.[73]

The art space as spatio-temporal expression can thus be conceived of as an adaptation to precarious conditions and a critique of conventional forms of artistic practice.

Given the rich accounts of the various temporal characteristics, there are some grounds for a closer consideration of interpreting temporality. Different descriptions pertaining to duration and continuity as well as temporariness, rhythm and improvisation are all connected to the aspects of mobility. For both the Wiesenberg and the artist at C-Space, for instance, it is their being from a place with a relatively more regulated and controlled spatiality that allows from Berlin and Beijing to feel like it is possible to improvise. It is their comparative experience, coming from elsewhere, that facilitates this feeling of Beijing or Berlin being "foggy" and "interesting." But attendant to this is their preparedness to move. To extrapolate from the C-Space interview, the degree of fixity parallels the temporary solutions witnessed in the street in terms of electricity for the barbecue. These are makeshift, provisional adaptations that underline the consequence of the art space as a spatio-temporal expression.

Theorizations of temporality offer some guidance to begin connecting art space, mobility and temporality. Critical theories of temporality are often defined by a Marxian conception of time tied to wage, coinciding with the emergence of clock-time or

[71] OBJ1. Personal Interview. 6 October 2012.
[72] OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.
[73] Miles (1997) p. 164.

industrial time as the primary means of standardization, regimentation and commodification of time that is the essence of the urban. These ideas of time seem to bear little relevance for the temporal experience of the art spaces, though foundational for urban theory.[74] Beyond these ties to industrialization and modernization that result in a synchronization that underlies urban life, the temporality of contemporary urban life is popularly tied to speed. Acceleration[75] and instantaneous time[76] assume the inevitable trajectory of the urban being characterized by increasingly temporary spatialities. The rise of technologies, which has resulted in a condition where "products and images are increasingly disposable in a 'throwaway society' in which there is a strong emphasis upon the volatility and ephemerality in fashions, products, labour processes, ideas and images"and heightened the temporariness endemic to daily life, a condition in which the "temporary contract" is everything.[77] This trajectory of thinking about temporality as temporariness is becomes tied with mobility.

Yet temporariness is only one form of temporality characterizing these spaces. Unlike the inevitable demise that Urry seems to indicate in his conceptualization of instantaneous time, these art spaces connect temporality with mobility, but provide a more differentiated understanding of spatio-temporal forms. They are not just victims of technologies that facilitate increased forms of mobility. Temporariness can also be a result of pre-emptive strategies to avoid displacement. Moreover, the practice of making the art space, and of dealing with the banalities of spatiality evoke a desire for more continuity for many art spaces. The temporality of permanence is a prescient issue when dealing with territoriality and the daily work of making an art space. Rhythms related to event-based publics and improvisational forms further highlight aspects of artistic practice, concepts and motivations ranging from modes of disruption to adaptation. Their ability to be mobile, to transfer resources, and the context of mobility all shape the spatio-temporal expression of the art space. This is evidenced through their perception of permanence, or relative stasis in contrast to "everyone" moving. The art space is not an objective, physical space. This is not only a stated artistic concept, but also an interpretation about their consequence for the city. The relevance of this kind of understanding about place-making in cities is further explored in theorizing back.

[74] Simmel (1903); Thompson (1967); Urry (2000); Hubbard (2006).
[75] Virilio (1977); Virilio (2001).
[76] Urry (2000).
[77] Lash and Urry citing Toffler (1970), Lyotard (1984) and Harvey (1989b). Lash/Urry (1994) p. 245.

Chapter 6

Theorizing Back

The task of this final chapter is to explore some theoretical consequences from the preceding empirical findings. After a brief discussion of the practice of theorizing back, a working definition for spaces of possibility is established. The art space is relevant to understandings about urban space because it exposes the spaces of possibility in the city. In a context of inevitabilities, art spaces reflect modes of adaptation and alternative practice.

This chapter makes three theoretical contributions. First, it complicates the myth of the urban frontier, which is based on a modus of conquest. While this myth has a function, the experience of the art space includes differentiated frontiers, where the quality of frontier-crossing is varied, and circulations abound. Second, empirically sourced ideas contribute to the development of new urban figures, setting apart the artist from the frontier pioneer, but also from the migrant, bourgeois bohemian and flâneur. The artist is connected here to the making of the art space, with a creative and spatial consequence. Furthermore, the concept of a "cruise ship space" is developed as an alternative mode of thinking about mobility, shifting from mobility between spaces towards mobility as constitutive of space. This is also connected to the comparative approach which helps to expose spaces that are more "in-between" than isolated counterparts. Finally, I consider the heuristic presentism in the empirical work on mobility, and the place-making practices lacking in historical context, which merit a longitudinal methodology.

The selected mode of theorizing back[1] borrows from grounded theory, which develops theoretical concepts sourced in data rather than deducing hypotheses from existing theories.[2] Having built the empirical chapters around thematic clusters structured broadly around conceptual motivations, practices and spatio-temporal consequences, this chapter further considers broader theoretical implications from the em-

[1] Though Ward references the need for "theorizing back" in discussing relational comparison, he does not concretize further what this could entail (2009: 12).

[2] Glaser/Strauss (1967).

pirical experience of these art spaces. In doing so, it also borrows from anthropological traditions[3] locating theory in a space "below high abstraction to hover over actual human projects and goals unfolding in myriad circumstances of possibility and contingency."[4] Thus it adopts an approach to theory as sets of ideas that exist between universal law and description. In the context of the present work, theory is understood "as conceptual or sensitizing schemes, and not as explanatory theory proper."[5]

Perhaps more constructively, these sensitizing schemes might further serve to establish some mid-range theoretical ideas[6] that "embrace a more relaxed approach to what urban theory is and can be."[7] Understanding theory as sensitizing schemes rather than explanatory law will make tenable the generalization from such a narrow qualitative study. The focus for finding these sensitizing schemes begin with the practices of the art spaces and their effects on the city. In other words, "the starting point. . . is thus not how singular principles define a city environment, but rather the array of problem-solving and spatializing practices that are in play in shaping an urban field."[8] By focusing on the practices of these art spaces in shaping urban space, one instrumental concept I develop is the function of the art space in exposing the *space of possibility* in the city.

Highlighting the concept of "possibility" politicizes the experience of the art space in shaping the urban. Far from neutral reflections of available technology or infrastructure,[9] the forms of mobility that facilitate the existence of the art space are connected to actors, resources and the influence of the creativity imperative. In facilitating these spaces, mobility is a central component in the contested claims to space. Moreover, the mobility evidenced in the previous chapters reflects simultaneous conditions of uncertainty and opportunity, both precariousness and agency, which underlines the useful focus on "possibility." I borrow the term from Amoore's work on risk and security in her genealogy of the politics of possibility. In policy decisions around security, she argues, it is a calibration of both minimizing risk and speculative opportunity. Policy-making has shifted from a focus on probability towards possibility.[10] The space of possibility reflects behavior that originates from both pre-emptive adaptations to avoid displacement (Platoon) as well as conceptual mission statements seeking to be a circus (HomeBase Project).

The "politics of possibility" holds central the conceptualization of "becoming"–

[3] Ong/Collier (2005).
[4] Ong (2011) p. 12.
[5] Hedstrom/Swedberg (1998) p. 1.
[6] "Mid-range theory" has an established tradition in sociology, setting what some have considered to be the dominant mode of theory-making in the field for a generation. Cf. Merton (1949) and Boudon (1991). Though Merton's work was intended as guide for empirical research, it has also influenced the social sciences more broadly, in its approach towards bounded rather than universal theory-making. Giddens offers a rich discussion of Merton's influence, and a more general account of theory-building in sociology. Giddens (1987).
[7] Harding/Blokland (2014) p. 1.
[8] Ong (2011) p. 10.
[9] Urry (2000); Virilio (1977).
[10] Amoore (2013).

Figure 6.1: The windows of the self-renovated Wiensenberg art space look into a courtyard with old brick ruins. One of the co-founders described the “foggy” legal conditions in Berlin, which helps to make these kinds of art spaces possible.

recall Dovey’s distinction between Heidegger’s ontology of being-in-the-world and Deleuzian notions of becoming-in-the-world.”[11] It is a useful approach to thinking about the art space:

> Conceptualizing space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the politics of possibility.[12]

Furthermore, these politics do not reflect strategies of pure resistance or domination, but situated moments of contestation. They hold the view that “urban environments are animated by a variety of transnational and local institutions, actors and practices that cannot be neatly mapped out in advance as being on the side of power or on the side of resistance, as if positions could be so unproblematically delineated.”[13] This also resonates with Grossberg’s call for a vision for a political future beyond the dichotomy of “domination and resistance,” which is instead “based on a politics of practice–what people do, what they invest in, where they belong.”[14] In closing HomeShop in Beijing, the founders published an “Appendix” of contributions from various collaborators about the art space. In the introduction, they state one central

[11] Heidegger (1962); Deleuze/Guattari (1987); Dovey (2010); Dovey (2011).
[12] Massey (2005) p. 59.
[13] Cf. Ong (2011) p. 9 and Harvey (1997).
[14] Grossberg (1994) p. 20.

tenant of HomeShop: “Daily life, work, and the community become explorations of micropolitical possibility.”[15]

Shifting towards practice, a space of possibility that is political resonates with what critical ethnographer Madison has called “the performance of possibilities,” centered “on the principles of transformation and transgression, dialogue and interrogation, as well as acceptance and imagination to build worlds that are *possible*.”[16] The advantage of qualitative research is that it makes more evident both the multiple strategies involved in making art spaces, “the innumerable ways of playing” that De Certeau describes as “combatants’ strategems.”[17] He describes these circumventions of the rules of a space as both artful and pleasurable.[18]

These “strategems” may be characterized by “promiscuous borrowings, shameless juxtapositions, and strategic enrollments of disparate ideas, actors, and practices from many sources circulating [in the world].”[19] They are not, however, always pleasurable and their at times excruciating traits are obscured by the “play” analogy or the ascriptions of promiscuity. The games being played have different stakes for different players, are constantly changing just as the constellation of players changes. Consider, for example, Spotts’ history of *The Shameful Peace: How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Nazi Occupation*.[20] Just as the game was an unstable set of rules, the forms of survival had different connotations:

> In ways honourable and dishonourable, they sought to survive. Survival meant different things, of course. For some, it was a matter of staying alive in the most primitive sense of simply scrounging enough to eat or escaping arrest, deportation and execution. For others, it was to be able to ignore the world around them and to practise their art without interference. For still others, it was finding some way to endure spiritually in an unbearable environment.[21]

While it would be far-fetched to relate the context of occupied Paris during World War II to that of 2012 Berlin or Beijing, the reference is meant to highlight how playing along is not a neutral game. It is also meant to draw attention to the fact that De Certeau’s “rules of a constraining space” are subject to constant change themselves. Through focusing on the practice, the various modes of getting along or contestation, some aspects of the “rules” are made more evident. It is no accident that in studying artists and art, Novy and Colomb discuss “spaces of hope” or that Pinder discusses “cities of possibility.”[22] Art, artists and art spaces inspire thinking about interventions into static, even hegemonic notions of urbanism. Indeed, the power of the creativity

[15] Eddy/Lazaridou-Hatzigoga (2014).
[16] Madison (2003) p. 472.
[17] DeCerteau (1984) p. 18.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ong (2011) p. 23.
[20] Spotts (2008).
[21] Spotts (2008) p. 254.
[22] Pinder (2008); **?**, .

imperative in elevating certain actors, and the forms of mobility that enable these actors certain strategies, all serve to underline the city (not just the art space) as a space of possibility. In Simone's paraphrasing of Rancière,[23] "the city was the possibility of those who have 'no part in anything' to become 'anyone at all.'"[24] Perhaps one means to realize this urban possibility is through practices like those involved in making the art space.

Empirically sourced theoretical contributions follow, which showcase the strengths and limits of comparative urbanism as a theory-building approach. In interpreting these spaces of possibilities, a critique, a contribution and a reflection are offered.

6.1 Myth of the urban frontier

I think Berlin has no real urbanistic idea. There is no vision. There is no really structured urbanism. So what we have here is the wild west, it's a bonanza.
— Co-founder of Mica Moca in Wedding, Berlin[25]

And it's just kind of the wild west here.
— Founder of Telescope, Caochangdi, Beijing[26]

The recurrent reference to the frontier in a number of interviews suggested something "wild" about the context of where the art spaces were being realized in both Beijing and Berlin. Yet these quotes are specific in referencing a "wild west" and suggesting therefore a more specific kind of frontier, with a particular longitude.[27] What kind of frontier were the founders referencing, and what kind of frontiers are enacted through the practice of locating their art space?

Indeed, the image of the wild west is a specific reference to its ontological roots in the American west, evoking a distinct kind of frontier romanticism. The epistemological roots of the American frontier can be sourced to Turner's frontier thesis in which he argued that American democracy was forged at the frontier, and that the closing of the "old frontier" implied a momentary crisis that could only be alleviated by finding a new one.[28] Building on Turner, Slotkin develops the idea that the wild west frontier forged the myth of the nation and is set up as a justification for the nation-building

[23] Rancière (2004).
[24] Simone (2011) p. 356.
[25] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.
[26] OBJ15. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
[27] The historical reference to "frontier" in Beijing and Berlin would have completely different connotations than the "wild west" reference. See e.g. Brubaker's "Frontier theses: Exit, voice and loyalty in East Germany" about the context of German reunification (1990) or Lattimore's "Origins of the Great Wall of China: A frontier concept in theory and practice" about walled, immovable frontiers (1937). The reference being made in the quotes is about a "wild west" that speaks to an imagination of a frontier not related to the more "local" applications of the concept of the frontier.
[28] Often cited as a presentation Turner made at the American Historical Association in 1893, the influential essay "The Frontier in American History" was republished by Turner in a collection in 1920.

project. In the last book of his trilogy, Slotkin begins with John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign, quoting Kennedy:

> The problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and we stand today on the edge of a new frontier–the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats... For the harsh facts of the matter are that we stand on this frontier at a turning point in history.[29]

Slotkin contends that the frontier symbolism justified not just political power, but specifically the employment of violence at new frontiers, in wars fought abroad. Thus, the conceptual shift of the "frontier" from the Cartesian idea of westward expansion in North America to a symbol or myth still remained committed to its function as a justification of conquest.

Though the viability of the frontier has somewhat declined for the U.S. in its policies abroad, the frontier remains in the current lexicon when talking about domestic arenas,[30] including the city. This is in part thanks to Smith's reinterpretation of frontier mythology. He argues that:

> The irresistible appeal in the press and the public to script gentrification as a new frontier comes from many sources. It is a highly resonant imagery bound up with economic progress and historical destiny, rugged individualism and the romance of danger, national optimism, race and class superiority.[31]

Turner, Slotkin and Smith concur that the ultimate purpose of the "frontier" serves to justify various forms of conquest.

Beyond this consensus about its justification for conquest, however, the delineations of the frontier border have been varied greatly. Smith's urban frontier is defined by a "prosaic economic truth" and remains dedicated to Cartesian space, delineating properties of investment and disinvestment.[32] This economic focus on the frontier is also adopted by Leitner, Peck and Sheppard in their discussion of the expansion of neoliberalism:

> Taking seriously the varied ways in which space matters to, while being shaped by, neoliberalism and its contestations, we focus on urban frontiers as a window into the spatiality of these processes. In this respect, urban frontiers are where neoliberalism quite literally 'comes to town.' ... the urban frontier has an additional meaning: Urban boundaries are increasingly fuzzy, while interurban networks are increasingly diffuse and complex, such that processes of urban change routinely exceed 'the city' in a variety of ways.[33]

[29] Slotkin (1992) p. 2.
[30] Slotkin (1992).
[31] Smith (1996) p. 186.
[32] Ibid., p. 187.
[33] Leitner/Peck/Sheppard (2007) p. viii-ix.

While the exact boundaries may be unclear, the frontier myth is unambiguous about the spaces beyond the frontier and the spaces within the frontier. Thus the frontier of the contemporary inner city, like the American West, works to rationalize and legitimate a process of conquest, and "urban pioneers, urban homesteaders and urban cowboys are the new folk heroes" in the gentrification processes that characterize urban conquest.[34] The idea of these urban pioneers was also used in Berlin by the Senate for Urban Development to describe "a new species of urban players, for whom urban spaces, untamed territory at best, is something to be discovered, squatted, conquered."[35] The term was also used by architect Klaus Overmeyer to draw an analogy between the behavior of temporary users of the city with military scouts who would "go on reconnaissance trips to chart unknown territories and prepare the ground for those who would later settle there."[36]

Moreover, the frontier justifies conquest economically as well as ideologically:

> The frontier ideology rationalizes social differentiation and exclusion as natural, inevitable. . . The substance and consequence of the frontier imagery is to tame the wild city, to socialize a wholly new and therefore challenging set of processes into safe ideological focus. As such, the frontier ideology justifies monstrous incivility in the heart of the city.[37]

It is a forceful condemnation, saturated in the spatialization of power that the frontier implies.

Beyond the interviewees' references to the frontier, however, the experience of the art space serves to complicate the urban frontier mythology. The assumption of linear progression and the irretrievable, inevitable rise of property prices lies at the base of Smith's argument. To some extent, this holds true for art spaces when they are in the phase of searching out new locations. Location and property value are a major factor for the cost of rent, and cost plays a big role in the decisions. Recall the experience of Platoon, for example, who negotiates for the use of low-cost locations for short term agreements in order to help establish locations. In their negotiations, Platoon operates on the assumption that there will be an inevitable property value increase as a result of their activities. In this way they may serve as the "urban cowboys" of Smith's gentrification frontier.

Yet other experiences reveal various circulations at play, which question whether the frontier delineations are so easily established. The movement of the art spaces is indicative of a less progressive idea of the urban frontier. While costs and contracts play a role in decisions to relocate, there are also other factors. For instance, the art spaces within the second ring in Beijing all made concerted efforts to find spaces within the second ring, despite the lack of space and costs. This does not

[34] Smith (1996) p. xvi.
[35] Misselwitz/Oswalt/Overmeyer (2007) p. 104.
[36] Colomb (2012a) p. 141.
[37] Smith (1996) p. 16.

Figure 6.2: The *Heizhima hutong* where the Institute for Provocation is located is primarily a residential area. Infrastructural improvements to the streets, sewage and electricity made the *hutongs*, known for being overcrowded and largely lacking in indoor plumbing, more attractive.

reflect the regeneration processes in Smith and others' works[38] for which areas of disinvestment and reinvestment serve as spaces of departure and arrival.

Rather than being based on properties of investment or divestment, the frontier in the choice to relocate within the second ring could maybe better be described as an urban cultural frontier. The decision to move within the second ring was based on a number of factors related specifically to the kind of space available within the second ring. To some extent, it had to do with classic location-preference aspects like nostalgia, aesthetics and wanting to be in a particular kind of neighborhood.[39] Their location preference for the center of Beijing was in part also a reflex following the large-scale demolitions of the Old and Dilapidated Housing Redevelopment Program (ODHP) that began in 1990. It was also a reaction to the clustering and regulation of art in districts, influenced by the 2008 financial crisis that cooled the art market, as well as wanting to do non-commercial art space as an alternative to art market-oriented art production.[40]

Certainly there were other neighborhood changes that also made relocating art

[38] See e.g. "Whose Urban Renaissance?" a collection of regeneration stories from 21 cities. Porter/ Shaw (2008)

[39] The role of sentiment and nostalgia in locational activities has a long history from Firey's studies of Boston (1945) to Edensor's studies of industrial ruin (2005).

[40] This is illustrated through the experience with art spaces located within the second ring like Arrow Factory, HomeShop, Institute for Provocation, Jiali and Za Jia Lab who all contrasted their location choice to that of galleries in 798.

spaces in these areas possible. In the early 2000s, cultural heritage preservation policies mapped out conservation areas within the second ring removing the threat of demolition for about seventeen per cent of the area within Beijing's second ring.[41] Due to entrepreneurialism within the *hutong* areas, many residents renovated and subleased their buildings while moving to other areas of Beijing.[42] Investments to infrastructure have made many of these areas more accessible. In summary, the art spaces (re)located in *hutongs* because of a complex number of factors: sentiments, aesthetics, historical trajectory, art market factors, art production factors, infrastructural changes and neighborhood. They did not just locate there because it was easy or the most affordable place to rent. Unsurprisingly, different factors were nonetheless more important for different art spaces. For some, the aesthetics of the building was attractive, like the taoist temple that Za Jia Lab is located in. For others, being located in a community where people could accidentally wander in was valuable. For Arrow Factory, the pedestrian experience was central in order to "envision the potential for transformative practices to enter into everyday life."[43]

Among the art spaces located in *hutongs* was HomeShop. Though cost and a contract terms played a role in their closure in 2015, it was not determined solely by these factors. The co-founders were themselves in constant circulation. Recall that one of the co-founders of HomeShop in Beijng was also a co-founder of Program in Berlin. Although Program also closed, its ideas have metamorphosed into another kind of space in Berlin. While the Program co-founder frequently travelled from Berlin to Beijing, another co-founder of HomeShop moved from Beijing to Berlin for a project with Olafur Eliasson. They both met in Hong Kong to work on another project after both art spaces were closed. These movements were not about finding "the next city" in terms of a cultural frontier or the most attractive location factors. The movements were based on opportunities and trade-offs that reflect art world circulations more generally.[44]

This brings the discussion to the second area where art spaces can contribute to complicating the frontier mythology. Namely, the conditions under which they move– the art space, the artists and their resources–interpreted in terms of frontier crossings. The practices of art spaces reveal a willingness to engage and invest time, resources, etc. This engagement is heightened when spaces are under immediate threat, like in 798 or Caochangdi, or given political organization, like the Koalition der freien Szene. The Koalition, with the Netzwerk freier Berliner Projekträume und -initiativen, is comprised of a variety of artists and art spaces, has successfully lobbied for subsidies from the city government for art spaces like those surveyed here.[45]

[41] Shin (2010) p. 43.
[42] Ibid.
[43] See also previous Section 5.1. Ho/Wei/Yao (2011).
[44] Hennion/Grenier (2000).
[45] This was implemented in the form of an annual prize starting in 2012 that would specifically fund the art and project space's overhead costs, and was not project-based. The prize is granted by the mayor's office.

Figure 6.3: Arrow Factory is the window space on the right in which the TV screens are visible. Their neighbor is a food stall where pedestrians regularly pause to eat. This pedestrian experience is existential to their art space as most of the time art installations are meant to be seen through the windows.

They are in the process of negotiating a city tax with the mayor's office (Senatskanzlei). These organizations can have a lasting impact not just in the spatial claims that the art spaces make, but also in the governance structures of the context where they are located. This begs the question: at which point do art spaces organize, at what points do they push frontiers, and at what point do they then leave?

One of the key advantages of a qualitative methodology is the ability to highlight nuance and contradictions. With regards to mobility choices, it is apparent that there are degrees of mobility that need to be differentiated. These degrees determine things like: accessibility, enfranchisement, claim, urban citizenship, belonging– not only about rights of being able to move or stay, but also about barriers to entry in local politics.[46] This can be evidenced in simple issues like the language barriers preventing some from applying for available funding, or understanding government decision-making processes (see Section 3.4). It can also be further differentiated based on complex legal statuses. For instance, EU citizens from Shengen countries are in Berlin under different conditions than non-EU citizens or non-Europeans. These statuses determine things like residency visas, working permits, tax obligations, but also often how long they are able to stay under which conditions. So for different statuses, there are different qualifications required in order to qualify to stay, which affect their ability to enter into rental contracts.[47] For example, recall Institut für alles Mögliche who posited that their residency program is especially helpful for non-Germans to skip certain administrative hassles like getting Schufa forms (German credit check) often necessary for a rental contract.

The experience of frontier crossings is therefore highly varied. This underlines that other factors are at play that make certain mobilities more unrestrained or easier than others and that mobility cannot only be measured in terms of distances or speeds. What on the surface seems to be similar hide at times extremely different experiences of "crossing," and illustrates the "differential mobility empowerments" behind these art spaces.[48]

That some artists move and others fight speaks to older discussions. Smith recognized when he remarked, "that some artists become victims of the very gentrification process they helped precipitate, and that others actively opposed the process, has touched off a debate in the art press."[49] The stress is that only *some* artists, not all artists are faced with this displacement process. Is it because the rest have the resources to overcome, or resist? Or that those who move have the resources to be more mobile? What kind of resources?

[46] For a differentiated perspective about the barriers to entry specifically pertaining to artists see Boren and Young (2013).

[47] For example, Chinese residents with urban *hukou*, a kind of urban citizenship status, have different residency rights in Beijing than Chinese residents without *hukou*. Artists in Berlin from Spain have few administrative requirements with regards to residency and working permits in contrast to artists from the U.S. who need to provide proof of qualifications and financial independence when they apply for permits from the foreigner's office.

[48] Hannam/Sheller/Urry (2006) p. 3.

[49] Smith (1996) p. 18.

What is important here is that the fundamental assumption of the frontier as unambiguously dividing spaces of conquest is put in question. The conditions on either side are no longer so clear. Though the cultural frontier may serve as one frontier, it does not operate on the linear basis of Smith's gentrification frontier. It can be crossed and re-crossed. Whereas the frontier myth relies on a narrative of preordained conquest, whether political or economic, the reality of these art spaces is that the outcome of crossing a frontier is much less certain.[50]

As an alternative to the conceptualization of the frontier as a demarcation of wilderness for conquest, the activity of the art spaces would favor a demarcation of the frontier as a wilderness for exploration. When they opened their art space, TJ in China sought out interacting with artists in Beijing and transplanting ideas about borders and facilitating dialogue. But they felt no ownership about the space and laid no claims that they would be outraged if ordered to vacate (Cf. Section 3.4). Their art space is about their co-founders' partnership, not about the specific location. But they are always located somewhere. And in those cities where they are located, they are exploring a new possibility. Following the closing of their art space in Beijing in 2012, the founders of TJ in China spent a year doing residencies, exhibiting and selling works in the U.S., after which they received a grant from the Cultural Committee of the Mexican Congress and relocated back to Tijuana in 2014, still as TJ in China.[51] Keeping the art space and its concepts from Beijing intact, they sought to bring with them notions of art as a political instrument, something that could be feared. And it was their experience in China that helped them to embrace Tijuana: "it helped us to be very far away from our culture and trying to accept a new culture. That's when you start to value your own culture. You understand stuff that you didn't want to understand."[52] A 2002 Newsweek article on the "World's New Culture Meccas" also included the founders of TJ in China in describing Tijuana:

> This eclectic and ambitious mix of ideas, cultures and tastes helped spawn a thriving frontier atmosphere. Unlike their predecessors, who often rejected their roots in Tijuana because of the town's seedy reputation, this generation takes pride in its heritage. "No one is going to shut me up here," says [artist and co-founder of TJ in China], an abstract painter who has American citizenship but prefers to spend his time in the "Wild West" of his hometown.[53]

The descriptions of both frontier and wild west from the article interprets Tijuana as an unregulated wilderness, simultaneously "new" and representing a place of "heritage." TJ in China's experience with Tijuana is that their exploration on this frontier

[50] The frontier itself represents a a contested, complex geographic space, in which the outcomes are ultimately uncertain. Leitner/Peck/Sheppard (2007) p. 311.
[51] Deal (2015).
[52] Deal (2015).
[53] Schafer (2002).

is not finite, not a border to be crossed. There is no point of saturation. Their re-opened space in Tijuana has a residency program for Beijing artists, and exhibits exclusively local artists from Tijuana.[54] Their time in Beijing served to expand their cultural frontiers in Tijuana as they continue with TJ in China, in Tijuana.

The experience of TJ in China demands a redefinition of the frontier. For making the art space, the mobility is not about conquest, property investment or finding the next "culture mecca." The frontiers that they cross are about exploration and possibility. It offers an idea of (limited) hope. There isn't a predetermined imperialism of planting an art space with a mission. Rather, TJ in China was about gathering inspiration, and moving on or moving back based on available opportunity. This is also about relocating an art space with a specific concept in different places rather than ephemeral modes of "popping up."

These are non-linear experiences of mobility in terms of circulations between Beijing and Tijuana, or Beijing and Berlin, or the mobility of the founder of Blackbridge Art Space when she posted her itinerary for an upcoming trip on social media: "Vienna - Beijing - Qingdao - Shenzhen - Hong Kong - Beijing - Manila - Beijing - Vienna - Berlin - Munich - Vienna FLIGHTBOOKINGFRENZY." At a minimum, these patters of movement reflect multiple circulations. They question the mythology of a frontier that stands as a linear, progressive possibility an irretrievable threshold once conquered. These forms of mobility require a new conceptualization; as Soja wrote:

> We can no longer depend on a story-line unfolding sequentially, an ever-accumulating history marching straight forward in plot and denouement, for too much is happening against the grain of time, too much is continually traversing the story-line unfolding laterally. A contemporary portrait no longer directs our eye to an authoritative lineage, to evocations of heritage and tradition alone. Simultaneities intervene, extending our point of view outward in an infinite number of lines, connecting the subject to a whole world of comparable instances, complicating the temporal flow of meaning.[55]

The experience of art spaces in Beijing and Berlin complicates the myth of the urban frontier. It expands on the discussion from the previous chapter, which showed that various modes of mobility suggest spatio-temporal expressions defined by duration and extension as opposed to pop-up modes of isolated, instantaneous, accelerated existence. The experience of the art space challenges the inevitability of a linear progressivism with regards to urban change, highlighting the differentiated frontiers and varied quality of frontier-crossing and circular movements. In doing so they expose spaces of possibility–reaching beyond the art space to the locations they inhabit.

[54] Kilpatrick (2014).
[55] Soja (1989) p. 23.

6.2 Nomadic cruise ship spaces

Since the beginning we were very aware of, or we always had the desire to do the same thing anywhere else. There is the idea, the really crazy idea we go to Buenos Aires and do it there. There is the idea of having a ship and having the production the way we had, but sailing around. . . [56]

Places are like ships, moving around and not necessarily staying in one location.[57]

The concept of cruise ship space emerges from the empirical material, and offers an alternative to the frontier in thinking about mobility and urban space. Rather than thinking about mobility in terms of irretrievably crossing frontiers in a linear, progressive or even in a more complicated circular fashion, the ship conceives of space as movement. Rather than moving artists and resources, in order to create the art spaces in one location or another, the concept of the ship facilitates thinking about the art space as a moving object itself. Like TJ in China, who kept the art space from Beijing and transplanted it to Tijuana, the above quote seeks to preserve the art space, its ideas and practices. It resonates with the sentiments from a number of other interviews. The cruise ship would be something that is constantly on the move, and they would not need to deal with the challenges of finding new locations. In a way, this mobility could offer a more stable structure for their art practice, representing a kind of permanent mobility.[58]

The cruise ship serves as an extension of the kind of portable shipping containers that Platoon inhabits in Berlin, but with even more independence. Platoon's shipping containers represent a kind of portability, easily re-locatable. In their video of their relocation in 2012, the titles read: "8 Trucks. 2 Cranes. And 40 cargo containers. But what is it? It is not an office. It is not a gallery. And it's definitely not a hotel. Get ready for a place for inspiration and courage. A playground for the city–right out of the box."[59] Though portable, and easily contained in a box, they still have to find land on which to install their shipping containers. In contrast, being on the ship would give them the ability to be constantly on the move, with docking or anchoring as moments. The default state for Platoon is being installed on land somewhere, and movement, though built in through their limited time contracts, is an event. In contrast, the default state for a ship would be in transit or moving, with the anchoring points as the events.

Important to this idea of the cruise ship is that the mobility is not about moving between locations;[60] mobility constitutes the space itself. It is intrinsic to a kind of space that it is made to travel. In further developing this idea about the implications of a constantly mobile space, the parallel figure of the nomad is useful. As discussed

[56] OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.
[57] Hannam/Sheller/Urry (2006) p. 13.
[58] Again, this departs from assumed categories of "temporary mobility" and "permanent migration." Bell/Ward (2000)
[59] Platoon (2012).
[60] Cresswell (2006).

in the previous chapter, the figure of the nomad was regularly referenced in the interviews to describe the kind of mobility the art space founders were engaged in. The nomad is a mobile figure whose identity is inextricably tied to movement. It stands in distinction to the migrant:

> While the migrant goes from place to place, moving with a resting place in mind, the nomad uses points and locations to define paths... The nomad is never reterritorialized, unlike the migrant who slips back into the ordered space of arrival.[61]

Reapplied to the cruise ship: the purpose of mobility is not set towards a destination, but it is about the cruising, the movement itself.

Indeed, for the figure of the nomad, the characteristic points are connected to a very particular form of mobility. Sutherland describes:

> The question of nomadism is first and foremost connected to issues of mobility. The nomad, as a sociological category, is a wanderer, an itinerant, a peripatetic who does not associate home with a fixed place.[62]

Its identity is connected with its mobility as well as a kind of cultural distance.[63] The nomad does not have a place of "return" that would represent home, but makes home as it moves. Consider the names "HomeShop," "HomeBase Project," "Za Jia" or "Jiali," all references to ideas of home. Their distance from the places they are wandering is also reflected in the feelings expressed by art spaces who do not feel a sense of entitlement or ownership over the land or property they inhabit (Section 3.4). In addition, "for global nomads, mobility is more than merely a spatial displacement. It is also a component of their economic strategies, as well as of their own self-identities and modes of subjectivity."[64] This is crucial to why the nomad lens is useful–it is through their mobility that they are able to do much of what they do, and mobility also defines who they are.

Further delineating characteristics include their differences from urban figures like the bourgeois bohemian[65] on issues of "consumerism, labor and monadic individualism."[66] They also stand in contrast to Benjamin's flâneur,[67] which takes a wandering romanticism to the city. The figure of the nomad in the city is less consumption-oriented in terms of enjoying the city. Fastidious consumption is also not seen as a method of securing their identity, and they tend to be more collaborative than individualistic in their place-making activities. Nomadic identities, according to Joseph are a means of performing belonging or citizenship in a situation of vast migration and

[61] Ibid., p. 49.
[62] Sutherland (2014) p. 936.
[63] Spradley (1970).
[64] D'Andrea (2006) p. 105.
[65] Brooks (2000).
[66] D'Andrea (2006) p. 99.
[67] Benjamin (2002).

relocation.[68] Simultaneously, nomadic citizenship "fractures coherent categories of belonging, offering instead incomplete, ambivalent, and uneasy spaces of everyday life. . . " where the importance of the state recedes in favor of "transversal, nonlinear arenas of postnational identification."[69] The figure of the nomad connotes participation in non-state-based modes of belonging rather than traditional integration and naturalization associated with migration or individualistic modes of differentiation associated with the BoBo or flâneur. This is illustrated when the founder of HomeBase Project in Berlin explains:

> What we're doing most with the nomadic model is also kind of, knowing that or out of even a frustration of that, what we're doing is kind of a response in many ways. Because it's taking artists, inhabiting spaces and kind of claiming the exploration or the interpretation of home. And inserting that into the city. . . a lot of what comes up usually does relate to these questions of urban change and of, easily cause of that place of victim and agent. So the only way that we do is actually taking empty spaces, doing an action and doing something that's enriching, that's different, that's reflective, as a mirror back also to all the change that's happening.[70]

Insofar as they are based on ideas about "home" the art space aims to explore questions about belonging. And to the extent that they seek to be reflective of change, they facilitate a symbiotic relationship that is more phoretic. Neither the art space nor the city gain from this relationship. Yet she also claims that they seek to do something enriching, which would claim a different kind of symbiotic relationship that reflects the characterization of the nomad as something more than just riding along.

The figure of the nomad is famously used by Deleuze in "nomadology" to express a particular kind of transgression and agency. Nomadic subjectivity has served as a rich site for theorizations that stress the potential of "becoming" to oppose fixed conceptions of identity.[71] Again, it can be analytically useful to consider the nomad in contrast to the migrant; some have argued that migration studies focus on the conditions that instigate migration and often affirm systemic conditions over agency of the migrant.[72] Cresswell argues that "in migration theory, movement occurred because one place pushed people out and another place pulled people in. So, despite being about movement, it was really about places."[73] In contrast, the nomad insists on a focus on movement, whose identity, purpose and practices are based in mobility rather than place.

Another reason the nomadic figure might be useful to understand the experience of the art space deals with the impetus for mobility. D'Andrea has posited that "Although conditioned by political economies, global nomads embody a specific type

[68] Joseph (1999).
[69] Ibid., p. 17.
[70] OBL5. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
[71] Braidotti (1994); Braidotti (2002); Sutherland (2014).
[72] D'Andrea (2006) p. 98.
[73] Cresswell (2010) p. 18.

of agency informed by cultural motivations that defy economic rationale."[74] So unlike labor migrants who may move to seek better chances for employment, the movement of nomads might actually be economically risky and costly, and their motivations are driven often more by their artistic practices and inspirations. Here, again the idea of "possibility" is useful as a mediating motivation between risk and opportunity. Art spaces were not only motivated by economic motivations, but encapsulate a diversity of art conceptual ideas. Certainly there were collectives like "We said let there be space and therefore there was space" in Beijing and Stedefreund in Berlin through which its members could pool resources. Though these collectives were contributing to the costs of running these art spaces, there was also a concept about the kind of events, projects and art works that would be produced and presented in these art spaces. The collectives were not just about co-funding an exhibition space. These art spaces sought to do something that was separate from the art market, like Gland and Blackbridge in Beijing or Kurt Kurt in Berlin. The artists behind these art spaces distinguished between the art works produced for a market and the kind of projects they wanted to implement in the art space.

There is an emancipatory gesture in the figure of the nomad, which might also hold true if applied to the cruise ship. The nomadic cruise ship represents a transgression of fixities, in offering alternative modes of belonging and identity that is more associated with becoming. It also opens a space of possibility for non-commercial practices and art works not beholden to an art market. The ship serves as a means to protect and claim these spaces in the context of a competitive urban arena. Their movement is protective (consider Kunstraum Bethanien's island from Section 3.2), pre-emptive (Platoon's pre-emptive displacement strategies from Section 4.1) and inspirational to their work (C-Space regarding inspiration from Section 5.3). Indeed, the *mobility* of the cruise ship would be the defining characteristic for these examples, not the destinations. As a metaphor, the cruise ship offers an elegant simplicity in re-thinking mobility in terms of mobility between spaces towards mobility as constitutive of space. But what is at stake in this metaphor?

Central to risks endemic to the idea of the nomadic cruise ship is the problem that its emancipatory gesture is accompanied by an isolationist move in which they enjoy certain rights without responsibilities. It leaves the realm of symbiotic relationship, even one that is only phoretic in which the two organisms ride along with one another. Rather than moving together, the nomadic cruise ship has its own trajectory.

More specifically, and borrowing from some tourism literature, the nomadic cruise ship is a bubble. On the one hand, this enables passengers to feel more at ease, comfortable, liberated and playful,[75] especially for specific social groups who could travel alone while not feeling lonely.[76] On the other hand, their distance from territo-

[74] D'Andrea (2006) p. 98.
[75] Yarnal/Kerstetter (2005).
[76] Hutchinson et al. (2008); Liechty/Ribeiro/Yarnal (2009).

rial jurisdictions allows for tremendously detrimental impacts on the environment.[77] While it is clear that cruise ships produce "large volumes of waste," the industry is largely unregulated: "The environmental costs of the sector are incalculable."[78] Furthermore, the experience of cruise ship passengers can often be disruptive when they do from time to time descend from the ship to enter "host communities." Indeed, there is a power differential between the ports and the ships whereby "ports too often perceive that they need the cruise ships more than the cruise lines need them, but in fact there is a mutual need."[79]

Similar to this tourism literature about actual cruise ships, research on strategies of insulation by social groups in the city show the costs of these isolating tendencies. For example, in withdrawing into enclaves, affluent groups increase processes of segregation and polarization.[80] This can have major consequences when they are unwilling to invest social capital in the areas they live.[81] Unlike the focus on a "middle class," where choices of withdrawal are based on aspects of security, to "pad the bunker" in a context of a feral city,[82] social capital investments imply choices with regards to where families send their children to school.[83] This implies costs for local institutions, like schools, who lose out on these investments.

The isolating activity of art spaces would have slightly different implications. The isolating, utopic "psycho-geographic islands" described in Chapter 3 serve a function, at least for the makers of the space. It is a critique of the competitive urban setting that they want to be removed from, a means to create an alternative possibility to perceived inevitabilities. As groups huddle in a defensive mode against an outside authority, "segregation and concentration fulfills a protective role, like that of a herd of buffalo, holding off wolves."[84] If the isolating gesture is a protective move, then it parallels in some ways the behaviors of the middle class, whose isolationist moves deal in the first line with the simultaneous preferences for security or social mobility while desiring to live in certain urban neighborhoods.[85] This comes at a cost for the neighborhoods and begs the question: "Can we keep up with the costs of a perpetually nomadic subjectivity?"[86] Interestingly, this echoes tourism literature on the cruise ship, when Brida and Zapata ask: "Are we sure that the benefits of attracting cruises to a tourism destination are higher than the costs?"[87]

The cruise ship space, whether scary or hopeful, offers an alternative trope to understanding the nature of mobility and the city. Mobility becomes not only about

[77] Dowling (2006).
[78] Brida/Zapata (2010) p. 218.
[79] Brida/Zapata (2010) p. 224.
[80] Atkinson (2006); Butler/Lees (2006).
[81] Butler (2003).
[82] There is a large body of literature on gated communities in the city based on these security concerns. See e.g. Davis (1998).
[83] Butler (2003).
[84] Peach (1996) p. 387.
[85] Atkinson (2006).
[86] Sutherland (2014) p. 949.
[87] Brida/Zapata (2010) p. 224.

movement between spaces, but mobility also constitutes a space. The mobile space furthermore is not a non-space. It is a political space in which power relationships are contested and negotiated. Deutsche argued in *Evictions* that the art world helped redefine the public space as political space.[88] This study expands on this, additionally positing that art space-making also makes the mobile space a political space.

6.3 Reflection on presentist heuristic of mobility, longitudinal imperatives

Finally, in reflecting on the approach, the empirical results, and these theoretical developments, I consider some of the limits of the present study. Though some issues seem specific to the study of mobility, others likely pertain to the strengths and constraints of this particular comparative approach.

The advantage of a comparative urbanism approach that is more relational is that it helps highlight these spaces of becoming, of possibility, of in-between, the "Thirdspace."[89] Places are not entrenched in historically charged categories that limit comparison across difference. They do not further deterministic fallacies of developmentalism by which certain places in the world are permanently "catching up." It avoids re-inscribing irreducible difference across cities based on overly simplistic categories as "rich" and "poor." To assume, for example, that these mobilities are about seeking out affordable cities or exotic places, oversimplifies the geographies that these art spaces begin to map out.

Some of the advantages of this comparative approach is captured through an experience while carrying out the interviews, when I was constantly being asked by interviewees about their counterparts in Beijing and Berlin. Many of the interview partners had extensive experience in both cities (beyond making art spaces in both cities like HomeShop/Program), living or visiting, and found a comparative study of these two cities self-evident. For instance, the founder of Jiali in Beijing had lived in Berlin in the 1990s, and even tried studying Chinese at the Freie Universität Berlin, but found it too difficult to learn a third language in a second language. She connects Beijing and Berlin in contrast to Paris:

> I remember Berlin, you could go to an opening and meet a lot of people. Paris? Forget about it. If you don't know anyone, you won't be able to talk to anyone. It's very closed. And same in Beijing. And it's not much- it's not to show off. You don't go to an opening to show off in Berlin or in Beijing. And that's also I think what people like a lot. It's a very different atmosphere. . . For me, Beijing it's a bit like a laboratory. And maybe in this term, it's close to Berlin. Actually, in Beijing, you have a lot a lot of artists. I mean, most of the artists live in Beijing. You have a few in Shanghai,

[88] Deutsche (1998).
[89] Soja (1996).

> few in Chengdu, Kunming, maybe very few. But Beijing –hoo! massive, they're all there. And I'm sure this kind of creates something. It's really a lot. So I'm very happy to be next to that. Because then if you have a space, then OK, then you have a space to show all this creativity, you know? But yeah, it's a bit like Berlin actually.[90]

Though the reliance on interviews implies a necessarily subjective, and personal experience of making art spaces, these experiences help challenge assumptions of incommensurability based on static indicators. Beijing and Berlin do not share many static characteristics, but through this comparative approach it is evident that they do share some dynamic trajectories. These cities are relationally connected through the experience and practices of making these art spaces. These modes of creating alternative, romantic islands through leveraging creativity discourses and transferring international resources are similar to art spaces in both cities. Moreover, they are expressions of a mode of spatialization that is connected with temporality. The director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien describes this territorialization as an in-between station:

> I think first we have to rethink your– our our cartography. The world is no longer North-South-East-West. It's a permanent in-between and we have to speak not at first about locations, but about time. And if we are following that aspect, then we have to say, yes, it's right, artists are here for one year, so it's a concrete situation. *But*, Bethanien under these conditions is more or less a crossroad where the artists are not permanently, but only working for a moment before they are going somewhere. So, we are stabilizing only a very short time segment. But this is interesting, so we are breeding representatives from different locations and sending them out as diplomats of their own artistic perspective, for a very short time segment. So if we think about space, these artists are all like little satellites, they have that direction. They are having different orientations, and we can't catch them. They are not *bound* on our table. They're only here for a shorter time segment. And if we think about Berlin, and if we think about Beijing, for instance, then we will see that Berlin, also New York, other cities, are *the* centers where you can see that time is limited. And that time is permanently cut into very short segments. And life is going faster and faster. And because of this speed, the location is rapidly changing.[91]

Again this harks back to Urry and Virilio's deterministic predictions relating mobility with temporal acceleration. Yet Urry's lamentations about the demise of meaningful places seem unnecessary when considering the mobilities behind the art space rather than the individual artist. From the trajectories that are discernible in the present study, what seems ephemeral on the surface camouflage modes of achieving more continuity and duration. Art spaces adapt and pre-empt, they ride along with the changes in the city and purport to have symbiotic relationships that are phoretic.

[90] OBJ13. Personal Interview. 6 November 2012.
[91] OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.

Still, whether through the guise of a cruise ship or satellite, as in this above quote–for all their attempts to constitute themselves as fundamentally not dependent on physical space, the insistence that "it's not the physical walls,"[92] that "if it's not here, it's somewhere else,"[93] these art spaces are expressed in a time and place. They seem to help accelerate or moderate ongoing processes wherever they are located, but these impacts are only visible over time.

In addition, the focus on the making-of, especially in connection to questions around mobility, risks privileging mobility over immobility. This has serious consequences with regards to acknowledging contextual differences in which important structures of power are at play. For instance, in the imagined geographies of Beijing that European visitors of Za Jia Lab might bring with regards to their perception of an ancient temple (see Section 3.3). Or even in the personal backgrounds of some of the initiators of these spaces who have teaching positions and might reflect educational qualifications that suggest different social backgrounds (see Section 4.2). These experiences allude to certain social positions about the actors behind these art spaces. It touches on what Lash and Urry have described in the scheme of differential mobility empowerments as the difference between the "elite" who circulate, while the "poor" just move.[94] Yet understanding "elite" in these contexts requires another methodology that can encapsulate social stratification, a necessarily historical perspective.

To return to the comparative urbanism call for experimental approaches to compare across difference, a key question about the approach taken in the present study: Is it possible to compare across difference in a way that doesn't elide important differences? Which differences can comparison cross over, and which necessitate a fuller history?

For instance, a fuller history of place might provide a better sense of the power relationships between the landlords or municipal decision-makers or residents and the art spaces. In this regard, how could the present study have benefited from an approach that took into account "the importance of an historical perspective which mitigates against an overwhelming sense of newness in mobilities research"?[95] Maybe these negotiations are the same kinds of processes art spaces have always had to engage with. One thing this study cannot account for is a history of when these particular kinds of art spaces began to emerge, and maybe that break with the gallery reflects on important contextual changes as well as art historical shifts.[96]

To further elaborate on the danger of focusing on mobility, Cresswell discusses

[92] OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
[93] OBL18. Personal Interview. 06 July 2012.
[94] Lash/Urry (1994) p. 30.
[95] Cresswell (2010) p. 17.
[96] Bonnett presents specific art movements that break into the "everyday space" but does not associate them directly with art spaces. It would be worth investigating the historical spatiality of art movements, like the Situationists. Bonnett (1992).

the fetishization of mobility in nomadic metaphysics. He argues that taking standpoints of "anti-essentalism, anti-foundationalism, and resistance to established forms of ordering and discipline" carries with it a risk that "by focusing on mobility, flux, flow, and dynamism we can emphasize the importance of becoming at the expense of the already achieved–the stable and static."[97] Indeed, investigating the art space through place-making would benefit from a recognition of the fixities and moorings that also play a part in shaping mobility.[98] It is worth considering, however, that the focus on the art space (rather than the artist) as a means to address mobility begins to already address the issue of fixity.

Shifting the focus from the artist as an individual towards their activity through the art space also addresses some of the anachronistic ideas behind identity and "authentic" claims to the city. It especially helps to undermine "essentialist notions of identity," and through its focus on the art space "destabilises a whole range of claims for rights over space which are argued through the idea of origin."[99] For instance, the wide range of personal backgrounds may obfuscate connections between art spaces. Would it enrich the understandings of how these spaces are made if the reader knew that the collective behind "We said let there be space and therefore there was space" studied together in Sichuan, or that the Arrow Factory co-founder was raised Chinese-American or that the partnership behind Za Jia Lab is Italian and Chinese or that Telescope is run by someone much older than the young father behind OKKRaum 29? Are ideas about "based in Berlin" or "place of origin" anachronistic to the lived experience of the people behind these art spaces, as suggested in the interview with Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Cf. Section 5.3)? If we ignore these backgrounds, does the experience of making these art spaces reflect a new way to think about culture in the context of globalization or cultural globalization?[100]

Though provocative, these questions dangerously encroach on Augé's descriptions of non-place:

> A person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver. . . he tastes for a while–like anyone who is possessed–the passive joys of identity-loss and the more active pleasure of role-playing. There is no room there for history unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle, usually in allusive texts. What reigns there is actuality, the urgency of the present moment. Since non-places are there to be passed through, they are measured in units of time.[101]

Despite being conceptualized as spatio-temporal expressions, the art spaces presented here are decidedly meaningful places, whose practices of contestation reflect

[97] Cresswell (2006) p. 46.
[98] Bissell/Fuller (2011); Cresswell (2012).
[99] Jacobs (1996) p. 163.
[100] Alexander/Seidman (1990); Featherstone (1995); King (1997); Held (1999); Hopper (2007).
[101] Auge (1995) p. 103-104.

their political nature. Their awareness about positionality, certain strategies and negotiations often highlighted a critique or acceptance of the art world or urban context in which they are situated. The perceived similarities to "non-place" represents one of the main weakness of the methodological approach. As the study was based on one round of interviews, the "present moment" stands in the foreground. There were a few art spaces for which more secondary sources were available, like with TJ in China, and these helped to facilitate interpretations of circulation or duration.

One of the more unexpected findings, the interpretation of the movements representing duration rather than ephemerality, emphasizes the potential fruitfulness of a more longitudinal study. What forms of mobility would be visible if the researcher could follow the practices of these art spaces over time? It also serves as a contrast to the historical approach taken, for instance, by Abu-Lughod whose comparative work criticizes the ahistorical nature of much urban research on "global cities."[102] Because there is such a rich empirical potential in focusing on the practices of making these art spaces, it seems that going forward, following their work would be complementary way to provide another kind of historical perspective.

To insist again on the focus of art spaces rather than the individual, the forms of mobility relevant here are not just about the movement of individuals, but also about the mobility of ideas and resources. These art spaces represent resource transfers from elsewhere in the most literal and symbolic forms. In this regard as well, a more longitudinal design would help to capture the dynamic in-between-ness. This holds especially true as similar surfaces and outcomes seem to reflect tremendously different underlying forms of mobility. As noted above, the underlying "differential mobility empowerments" could conceivably be made more evident over time. While on the surfaces of these spatio-temporal expressions, the art spaces may be doing the same thing, fully understanding the stakes requires a longer perspective.

This resonates with Ma and Wu's critique of the convergence thesis:

> The convergence thesis does not allow the possibility that similar surface features of a phenomenon (in this case, urban form) may be created by different processes in different places and that universal processes can be mediated by local forces and processes embedded in local culture, history or economic and political systems.[103]

Indeed, this approach connecting practices in Beijing and Berlin highlights how making art spaces connects these cities, but it may also overemphasize similar surface features at the detriment of a more in-depth understanding of different underlying processes mediated by different systems.

One example of how to proceed is evidenced with the example of how common feelings of precariousness can originate from different legal structures in Section 4.1. Whereas for art spaces in Beijing it reflected the land-use politics of local government administrations, in Berlin it is a consequence of the short-term contracts many

[102] Abu-Lughod (1999).
[103] Ma/Wu (2005) p. 12.

art spaces have. This represents one way that differences in underlying systems can still be accounted for while simultaneously connecting a shared experience. It renders feasible a comparative lens that takes these underlying differences of vastly different cities into account without letting these differences lead to incommensurability.

Behind every art space is a complex past that is impossible to capture in the scope of a single study. In the interviews, the vast majority had a difficult time predicting what would happen with the art spaces in five years. It would be enriching for the temporal understanding of these art spaces to revisit them over time. The "new mobilities paradigm" offers a vast range of interesting research areas, but its focus on the inevitability of instantaneous, accelerating time would benefit from this longitudinal perspective. In the neighboring discipline of migration studies, a similar call has been made. Levitt and Jaworsky's review of transnational migration scholarship similarly calls for some attention to the *longue durée* of global change. They note the importance to situate transnational migration in a longer historical context in order to also take a more systematic approach to understanding the newness of ideas like national boundaries in the scheme of human history, for instance.[104] More historical context for studying mobility and art space might include perspectives on the art spaces of Weimar-era Berlin or pre-cultural revolution art spaces in Beijing, for example, and circumvent the heuristic presentism in mobility studies.

In part this need for a longitudinal perspective is also because certain consequences take time. One curator argued that the impact of art "takes more time to surface,"[105] making a direct relationship between art space and its environment difficult to decipher without a longitudinal perspective. More time may be required in order to witness this surfacing. Already some of this is evident in the present study. For instance, the circulations described about HomeShop and Program in Beijing and Berlin, as well as the trajectory of TJ in China in Beijing and Tijuana, were all only evident given accounts about their practices over time. These brief histories of art spaces reveal challenging notions about the frontier and the trajectories of mobility. Perhaps an even longer lens would contradict some of the findings in this chapter regarding the frontier and the cruise ship, making linear narratives or life cycles of art spaces more visible. Or perhaps it would challenge the findings about durations, favoring concepts of temporal acceleration after all. In any case, it inspires further research about these art spaces as they continue on their routes.

In an essay on *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Space*, Mouffe has posited that artistic practices are not only political in general terms, but that "artistic practices can contribute to questioning the dominant hegemony."[106] It is worth considering how the

[104] Levitt/Jaworsky (2007).
[105] CBJ5. Personal Interview 13.October 2012.
[106] Mouffe (2007) p. 4.

Figure 6.4: Kurt Kurt in Berlin-Moabit had the artist Christian Hasucha transform their art space for a project in 2008 in which their front window was removed and a tunnel was built from the sidewalk, called "More Space for Moabit" (*Mehr Raum für Moabit*) On the left, the street view shows how this seemed to extend the sidewalk and on the right was the tunnel under construction. It is evocative when considering how art spaces can instigate spaces of possibility. Source: Kurt Kurt Web Archiv.

emancipatory gesture of the making of these art spaces may extend beyond their escape from the art market, and find applications for the city. Those involved in making art spaces are not known for their rule-abiding acquiescence. As one curator put it, artists are the bad kids: "artists are the group, if they want something, they are going to get it no matter what... They're not the good kids, you know? Official, very, do-what-I-tell-you-to-do-kind of kids."[107] These art spaces reflect the possibility for these bad kids to shape the city. They are not just the dangerous outsiders that Lindner claims to be the preoccupation of urban research, but also productive place-makers.[108] Through the art space, another mode of understanding urban space surfaces, which places emphasis on the extensions to elsewhere that makes the localized territorializations possible.

Additionally, through this comparative approach favoring a relational focus on everyday practices and the banal issues of paying rent, cities are lowered from the pedestal having to represent the "global" or the "world" and become "ordinary" places.[109] This renders sites as diverse as Beijing and Berlin commensurable partners for comparison, without either serving as a primary reference point. While there are limits to the present comparative approach, which does not provide much histori-

[107] OBJ11. Personal Interview. 14 November 2012.
[108] Lindner (2004).
[109] Robinson (2006).

cal background for either city, there are also advantages for the kind of place-making practices and trajectories that are made visible. There is a richness to understanding these varied relations with elsewhere. To reiterate Massey's point, "places are what they are in part precisely as a result of their history of and present participation in relations with elsewhere."[110] To best encapsulate both, a longitudinal approach becomes imperative as a complementary method to the present study.

Until then, the present study has shown how multiple forms of mobility relevant for these art spaces help to expand ideas about spaces of possibility in the city. These are not based in forms of resistance, but in contestations that rely on mobile ideas, resources and actors, and often the mobility the art space itself. The art spaces in the present study also provide a way of rethinking the urban frontier as a progressive possibility. Rather than serving as the legitimation of conquest, irrevocable once crossed, their frontier crossings are explorative and circulate. The alternative concept of a nomadic cruise ship seems more attuned to the experience of the art space, as well as novel in conceptualizing mobility as constitutive of space (rather than mobility between space). But the elegant simplicity of the cruise ship metaphor also raises concerns about the costs of this isolating gesture. Art and artists have long preoccupied urban studies; these art spaces serve to enrich that body of work and perhaps also inspire others to engage with experimental approaches to comparison and theory-building.

[110] Massey (2011) p. 4.

Appendix A

Art spaces

Beijing

-Arrow Factory
-Bao Atelier
-Blackbridge Art Space
-C-Space
-Chen Xindong Contemporary Art Space
-DashiLa(b)
-Gland
-HomeShop
-Inside Out Art Museum
-Institute for Provocation
-Jiali
-Matthias Kueper Galleries
-Telescope
-TJ in China
-UCCA
-"We said let there be space"
-Nali Nali (Where Where)
-Za Jia Lab

REDACTED
Publicly accessible map available: http://tinyurl.com/hbyfx7g

Berlin

-Agora Collective
-Art Laboratory Berlin
-Ausland
-Grimmuseum
-HomeBase Project
-Institut für Alles Mögliche
-Künstlerhaus Bethanien
-Kunstraum Bethanien
-Kurt Kurt
-Liebig 12
-Mica Moca
-NGBK
-OKK Raum29
-Panke
-Platoon
-Program
-Silver Silver Lopez
-Stedefreund
-Substitut
-Superbien!
-Supermarkt
-Wiesenburg

REDACTED
Publicly accessible map available: http://tinyurl.com/z9oepub

Appendix B

Primary sources

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OBL14. Personal Interview. 13 May 2012.
OBL1. Personal Interview. 24 May 2012.
OBL5. Personal Interview. 21 June 2012.
OBL18. Personal Interview. 6 July 2012.
CBL8. Personal Interview. 13 July 2012.
OBL13. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.
OBL17. Personal Interview. 23 July 2012.
OBL2. Personal Interview. 30 July 2012.
OBJ10/OBL19. Personal Interview. 3 August 2012. (Two art spaces)
OBL9. Personal Interview. 6 August 2012.
OBL4. Personal Interview. 9 August 2012.
OBL12. Personal Interview. 10 August 2012.
OBL16. Personal Interview. 13 August 2012.
OBL6. Personal Interview. 20 August 2012.
OBL3. Personal Interview. 22 August 2012.
OBL25. Personal Interview. 24 August 2012.
OBL11. Personal Interview. 28 August 2012.
OBL24. Personal Interview. 29 August 2012.
OBL10. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
OBL15. Personal Interview. 20 September 2012.
OBL22. Personal Interview. 24 September 2012.
OBL26. Personal Interview. 27 September 2012.
ABJ7. Personal Interview. 10. October 2012.
CBJ5. Personal Interview. 13. October 2012.
OBJ8. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012.
OBJ13. Personal Interview. 6 November 2012.
OBJ11. Personal Interview. 14 November 2012.
OBJ2. Personal Interview. 15 November 2012.
OBJ1. Personal Interview. 6 October 2012.
OBJ21. Personal Interview. 15 November 2012.
OBJ15. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
OBJ16. Personal Interview. 16 November 2012.
OBJ18. Personal Interview. 17 October 2012.
ABJ4. Personal Interview. 3 December 2012.
ABJ12. Personal Interview. 10 December 2012.
OBJ19. Personal Interview. 18 December 2012.

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Figures (All photos are taken by author unless otherwise noted here)

Figure 1.1: Lifen Ren-Heidenreich

Figures 3.1 and 3.2: “We said let there be space and therefore there was space” 2012 Catalogue

Figure 4.4: Mica Moca 2011 Performance documentation. Website. www.micamoca.com

Figure 4.10: Supermarkt 2012 “Architecture as human nature” Exhibition documentation. http://www.facebook.com/ArchitectureAsHumanNature

Figure 5.9: Liebig12 2012 “Fried Rosenstock” http://www.facebook.com/Liebig12

Figure 6.3: Kurt Kurt 2008 “Mehr Raum für Moabit” Web Archive. http://www.kurt-kurt.de/html/Archiv.html

Additional photo and video of art spaces: renstudy.tumblr.com

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